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AT CASTERBRIDGE FAIR.

SING, Ballad-singer, raise a hearty tune !
Make me forget that there was ever a one
I walked with in the meek light of the moon
When the day's work was done.

Rhyme, Ballad-rhymer, start a country song !
Make me forget that she whom I loved well
Swore she would love me dearly, love me long ;
Then—what I cannot tell.

Sing, Ballad-singer, from your little book !
Make me forget those heartbreaks, achings, fears ;
Make me forget her name, her sweet, sweet look ;
Make me forget her tears.

THOMAS HARDY.

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THE INTRUSIONS OF PEGGY.¹

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

CHAPTER VIII.

USURPERS ON THE THRONE.

AIREY NEWTON was dressing for dinner, for that party of his which Tommy Trent had brought about, and which was causing endless excitement in the small circle. He arrayed himself slowly and ruefully, choosing with care his least frayed shirt, glancing ever and again at a parcel of five-pound notes which lay on the table in front of him. There were more notes than the dinner would demand, however lavish in his orders Tommy might have been; Airey had determined to run no risks. He was trying hard to persuade himself that he was going to have a pleasant evening, and to enjoy dispensing to his friends a sumptuous hospitality. The task was a difficult one. He could not help thinking that those notes were not made to perish; they were created in order that they might live and breed; he hated to fritter them away. Yet he hated himself for hating it.

To this pass he had come gradually. First the money, which began to roll in as his work prospered and his reputation grew, had been precious as an evidence of success and a testimony of power. He really wanted it for nothing else; his tastes had always been simple, he had no expensive recreations; nobody (as he told Tommy Trent) had any claim on him; he was alone in the world (except for the rest of mankind, of course). He saved his money, and in that seemed to be doing the right and reasonable thing. When the change began or how it worked he could not now trace. Gradually his living had become more simple, and passed from simple to sparing; everything that threatened expense was nipped in the bud. It began to be painful to spend money, sweet only to make it, to invest it, and to watch its doings. By an effort of will he forced himself to subscribe with decent liberality to a fair number of public institutions—his bankers paid the subscriptions for him. Nor did he fail if a

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direct appeal was made for an urgent case ; then he would give, though not cheerfully. He could not be called a miser, but he had let money get altogether out of its proper place in life. It had become to him an end, and was no longer a means ; even while he worked he thought of how much the work would bring. He thought more about money than about anything else in the world ; and he could not endure to waste it. By wasting it he meant making his own and other people's lives pleasanter by the use of it.

Nobody knew, save Tommy Trent. People who did business with him might conjecture that Airey Newton must be doing pretty well ; but such folk were not of his life, and what they guessed signified nothing. Of his few friends none suspected, least of all Peggy Ryle, who came and ate his bread-and-butter, believing that she was demanding and receiving from a poor comrade the utmost stretch of an unreserved hospitality. He suffered to see her mistake, yet not without consolation. There was a secret triumph ; he felt and hated it. That had been his feeling when he asked Tommy Trent how he could continue to be his friend. He began to live in an alternation of delight and shame, of joy in having his money, of fear lest somebody should discover that he had it. Yet he did not hate Tommy Trent, who knew. He might well have hated Tommy in his heart. This again was peculiar in his own eyes, and perhaps in fact. And his friends loved him—not without cause either ; he would have given them anything except what to another would have been easiest to give ; he would give them even time, for that was only money still uncoined. Coin was the great usurper.

The dinner was a splendid affair. Airey had left all the ordering to Tommy Trent, and Tommy had been imperial. There were flowers without stint on the table ; there were bouquets and button-holes ; there was a gorgeously emblazoned bill of fare ; there were blocks of ice specially carved in fantastic forms ; there were hand-painted cards with the names of the guests curiously wrought thereon. Airey furtively fingered his packet of bank-notes, but he could not help being rather pleased when Tommy patted him on the back and said that it all looked splendid. It did look splendid ; Airey stroked his beard with a curious smile. He actually felt now as though he might enjoy himself.

The guests began to arrive punctually. Efforts in raiment

had evidently been made. Mrs. John was in red, quite magnificent. Elfreda had a lace frock, on the subject of which she could not be reduced to silence. Miles Childwick wore a white waistcoat with pearl buttons, and tried to give the impression that wearing it was an ordinary occurrence. They were all doing their best to honour the occasion and the host. A pang shot through Airey Newton; he might have done this for them so often!

Trix came in splendour. She was very radiant, feeling sure that her troubles were at an end, and her sins forgiven in the popular and practical sense that she would suffer no more inconvenience from them. Had not Beaufort Chance raved his worst? and was not Fricker—well, at heart a gentleman? asked she with a smile. There was more. Triumph was impending; nay, it was won; it waited only to be declared. She smiled again to think that she was going to dine with these dear people on the eve of her greatness. How little they knew! In this moment it is to be feared that Trix was something of a snob. She made what amends she could by feeling also that she was glad to have an evening with them before her greatness settled on her.

Peggy was late; this was nothing unusual, but the delay seemed long to Tommy Trent, who awaited with apprehension her attitude towards the lavishness of the banquet. Would she walk out again? He glanced at Airey. Airey appeared commendably easy in his mind, and was talking to Trix Trevalla with reassuring animation.

‘Here she comes!’ cried Horace Harnack.

‘She’s got a new frock too,’ murmured Elfreda, regarding her own complacently, and threatening to renew the subject on the least provocation.

Peggy had a new frock. And it was black—plain black, quite unrelieved. Now she never wore black, not because it was unbecoming, but just for a fad. A new black frock must surely portend something. Peggy’s manner enforced that impression. She did indeed give one scandalised cry of ‘Airey!’ when she saw the preparations, but evidently her mind was seriously preoccupied; she said she had been detained by business.

‘Frock hadn’t come home, I suppose?’ suggested Miles Childwick witheringly.

‘It hadn’t,’ Peggy admitted, ‘but I had most important letters to write too.’ She paused, and then added, ‘I don’t sup-

pose I ought to be here at all, but I had to come to Airey's party. My uncle in Berlin is dead.'

She said this just as they sat down. It produced almost complete silence. Trix indeed, with the habits of society, murmured condolence, while she thought that Peggy might either have stayed away or have said nothing about the uncle. Nobody else spoke; they knew that Peggy had not seen the uncle for years, and could not be supposed to be suffering violent personal grief. But they knew also the significance of the uncle; he had been a real, though distant, power to them; the cheques had come from him. Now he had died.

Their glances suggested to one another that somebody might put a question—somebody who had tact, and could wrap it up in a decorous shape. Peggy herself offered no more information, but sat down by Tommy and began on her soup.

Conversation, reviving after the shock that Peggy had administered, presently broke out again. Under cover of it Peggy turned to Tommy and asked in a carefully subdued whisper:—

'How much is a mark?'

'A mark?' repeated Tommy, who was tasting the champagne critically.

'Yes. German money, you know.'

'Oh, about a shilling.'

'A shilling?' Peggy pondered. 'I thought it was a franc?'

'No, more than that. About a shilling.'

Peggy gave a sudden little laugh, and her eyes danced gleefully.

'You mustn't look like that. It's not allowed,' said Tommy firmly.

'Then twenty thousand marks——' whispered Peggy.

'Would be twenty thousand shillings—or twenty-five thousand francs—or in the depreciated condition of Italian silver some twenty-seven thousand lire. It would also be five thousand dollars, more cowrie shells than I can easily reckon, and, finally, it would amount to one thousand pounds sterling of this realm, or thereabouts.'

Peggy laughed again.

'I'm sorry your uncle's dead,' pursued Tommy gravely.

'Oh, so am I! He was always disagreeable, but he was kind too. I'm really sorry. Oh, but, Tommy——'

The effort was thoroughly well-meant, but sorrow had not

much of a chance. Peggy's sincerity was altogether too strong and natural. She was overwhelmed by the extraordinary effect of the uncle's death.

'He's left me twenty thousand marks,' she gasped out at last. 'Don't tell anybody—not yet.'

'Well done him,' said Tommy Trent. 'I knew he was a good sort—from those cheques, you know.'

'A thousand pounds!' mused Peggy Ryle. She looked down at her garment. 'So I got a frock for him, you see,' she explained. 'I wish this was my dinner,' she added. Apparently the dinner might have served as a mark of respect as well as the frock.

'Look here,' said Tommy. 'You've got to give me that money, you know.'

Peggy turned astonished and outraged eyes on him.

'I'll invest it for you, and get you forty or fifty pounds a year for it—regular—quarterly.'

'I'm going to spend it,' Peggy announced decisively. 'There are a thousand things I want to do with it. It is good of uncle!'

'No, no! You give it to me. You must learn to value money.'

'To value money! Why must I? None of us do.' She looked round the table. 'Certainly we've none of us got any.'

'It would be much better if they did value it,' said Tommy with a politico-economical air.

'You say that when you've made poor Airey give us this dinner!' she cried triumphantly.

With a wry smile Tommy Trent gave up the argument; he had no answer to that. Yet he was a little vexed. He was a normal man about money; his two greatest friends—Peggy and Airey Newton—were at the extreme in different directions. What did that signify? Well, after all, something. The attitude people hold towards money is, in one way and another, a curiously far-reaching thing, both in its expression of them and in its effect on others. Just as there was always an awkwardness between Tommy and Airey Newton because Airey would not spend as much as he ought, there was now a hint of tension, of disapproval on one side and of defiance on the other, because Peggy meant to spend all that she had. There is no safety even in having nothing; the problems you escape for yourself you raise for your friends.

Peggy, having sworn Tommy to secrecy, turned her head

round, saw Arty Kane, could by no means resist the temptation, told him the news, and swore him to secrecy. He gave his word, and remarked across the table to Miles Childwick: 'Peggy's been left a thousand pounds.'

Then he turned to her, saying, 'I take it all on myself. It was really the shortest way, you know.'

Indescribable commotion followed. Everybody had a plan for spending the thousand pounds; each of them appropriated and spent it on the spot; all agreed that Peggy was the wrong person to have it, and that they were immensely glad that she had got it. Suggestions poured in on her. It may be doubted whether the deceased uncle had ever created so much excitement while he lived.

'I propose to do no work for weeks,' said Miles Childwick. 'I shall just come and dine.'

'I think of an *édition de luxe*,' murmured Arty Kane.

'I shall take nothing but leading business,' said Horace Harnack.

'We shall really have to make a great effort to avoid being maintained,' murmured Mrs. John, surprised into a remark that sounded almost as though it came from her books.

Trix Trevalla had listened to all the chatter with a renewal of her previous pleasure, enjoying it yet the more because, thanks to Fricker's gentlemanly conduct, to the worst of Beaufort Chance being over, and to her imminent triumph, her soul was at peace and her attention not preoccupied. She too found herself rejoicing very heartily for Peggy's sake. She knew what pleasure Peggy would get, what a royal time lay before her.

'She'll spend it all. How will she feel when it's finished?'

The question came from Airey Newton, her neighbour. There was no touch of malice about it; it was put in a full-hearted sympathy.

'What a funny way to look at it!' exclaimed Trix, laughing.

'Funny! Why? You know she'll spend it. Oh, perhaps you don't; we do. And when it's gone——'

He shrugged his shoulders; her last state would be worse than her first, he meant to say.

Trix stopped laughing. She was touched; it was pathetic to see how the man who worked for a pittance felt a sort of pain at the idea of squandering—an unselfish pain for the girl who would choose a brief ecstasy of extravagance when she might ensure a permanent increase of comfort. She could not herself feel like

that about such a trifle as a thousand pounds (all in, she was wearing about a thousand pounds, and that not in full fig), but she saw how the case must appear to Airey Newton; the windfall that had tumbled into Peggy's lap meant years of hard work and of self-respecting economy to him.

'Yes, you're right,' she said. 'But she's too young for the lesson. And I—well, I'm afraid I'm incurable. You don't set us the best example either.' She smiled again as she indicated the luxurious table.

'A very occasional extravagance,' he remarked, seeing her misapprehension quite clearly, impelled to confirm it by his unrelenting fear of discovery, fingering the packet of five-pound notes in his pocket.

'I wish somebody could teach me to be prudent,' smiled Trix.

'Can one be taught to be different?' he asked rather gloomily.

'Money doesn't really make one happy,' said Trix in the tone of a disillusioned millionaire.

'I suppose not,' he agreed, but with all the scepticism of a hopeless pauper.

They both acted their parts well; each successfully imposed on the other. But pretence on this one point did not hinder a genuine sympathy nor a reciprocal attraction between them. He seemed to her the haven that she might have loved, yet had always scorned; she was to him the type of that moving, many-coloured, gay life which his allegiance to his jealous god forbade him to follow or to know. And they were united again by a sense common to them, apart from the rest of the company—the sense of dissatisfaction; it was a subtle bond ever felt between them, and made them turn to one another with smiles half-scornful, half-envious, when the merriment rose high.

'I'm glad to meet you to-night,' she said, 'because I think I can tell you that your advice—your Paris advice—has been a success.'

'You seemed rather doubtful about that when we met last.'

'Yes, I was.' She laughed a little. 'Oh, I've had some troubles, but I think I'm in smooth water now.' She hardly repressed the ring of triumph in her voice.

'Ah, then you won't come again to Danes Inn!'

There was an unmistakable regret in his voice. Trix felt it echoed in her heart. She met his glance for a moment; the

contact might have lasted longer, but he, less practised in such encounters, turned hastily away. Enough had passed to tell her that if she did not come she would be missed, enough to make her feel that in not going she would lose something which she had come to think of as pleasant in life. Was there always a price to be paid? Great or small perhaps, but a price always?

'You should come sometimes where you can be seen,' she said lightly.

'A pretty figure I should cut!' was his good-humoured, rather despairing comment.

Trix was surprised by a feeling stronger than she could have anticipated; she desired to escape from it; it seemed as though Airey Newton and his friends were laying too forcible a hold on her. They had nothing to do with the life that was to be hers; they were utterly outside that, though they might help her to laugh away an evening or amuse her with their comments on human nature and its phases. To her his friends and he were essentially a distraction; they and he must be kept in the place appropriate to distractions.

At the other end of the table an elementary form of joke was achieving a great success. It lay in crediting Peggy with unmeasured wealth, in assigning her quarters in the most fashionable part of the town, in marrying her to the highest bigwig whose title occurred to any one of the company. She was passed from Park Lane to Grosvenor Square and assigned every rank in the peerage. Schemes of benevolence were proposed to her, having for their object the endowment of literature and art.

'You will not continue the exercise of your profession, I presume?' asked Childwick, referring to Peggy's projected lessons in the art of painting and a promise to buy her works which she had wrung from a dealer notoriously devoted to her.

'She won't know us any more,' moaned Arty Kane.

'She'll glare at us from boxes—boxes paid for,' sighed Harnack.

'I shall never lose any more frocks,' said Elfreda with affected ruefulness.

Trix smiled at all this—a trifle sadly. What was attributed in burlesque to the newly enriched Peggy was really going to be almost true of herself. Well, she had never belonged to them; she had been a visitor always.

The most terrible suggestion came from Mrs. John—rather

late, of course, and as if Mrs. John had taken some pains with it.

‘She’ll have her hair done quite differently.’

The idea produced pandemonium.

‘What of my essay?’ demanded Childwick.

‘What of my poem?’ cried Arty Kane.

Everybody agreed that a stand must be made here. A formal pledge was demanded from Peggy. When she gave it her health was drunk with acclamation.

A lull came with the arrival of coffee. Perhaps they were exhausted. At any rate when Miles Childwick began to talk they did not stop him at once as their custom was, but let him go on for a little while. He was a thin-faced man with a rather sharp nose, prematurely bald, and bowed about the shoulders. Trix Trevalla watched him with some interest.

‘If there were such a thing as being poor and unsuccessful,’ he remarked with something that was almost a wink in his eye (Trix took it to deprecate interruption), ‘it would probably be very unpleasant. Of course, however, it does not exist. The impression to the contrary is an instance of what I will call the Fallacy of Broad Views. We are always taking broad views of our neighbours’ lives; then we call them names. Happily we very seldom need to take them of our own.’ He paused, looked round the silent table, and observed gravely, ‘This is very unusual.’

Only a laugh from Peggy, who would have laughed at anything, broke the stillness. He resumed:—

‘You call a man poor, meaning thereby that he has little money by the year. Ladies and gentlemen, we do not feel in years, we are not hungry *per annum*. You call him unsuccessful because a number of years leave him much where he was in most things. It may well be a triumph!’ He paused and asked, ‘Shall I proceed?’

‘If you have another and quite different idea,’ said Arty Kane.

‘Well, then, that Homogeneity of Fortune is undesirable among friends.’

‘Trite and obvious,’ said Manson Smith. ‘It excludes the opportunity of lending fivers.’

‘I shall talk no more,’ said Childwick. ‘If we all spoke plain English originality would become impossible.’

The end of the evening came earlier than usual. Peggy was

going to a party or two. She had her hansom waiting to convey her. It had, it appeared, been waiting all through dinner. With her departure the rest melted away. Trix Trevalla, again reluctant to go, at last found herself alone with Airey Newton, Tommy having gone out to look for her carriage. The waiter brought the bill and laid it down beside Airey.

'Is it good luck or bad luck for Peggy?' she asked reflectively.

'For Peggy it is good luck; she has instincts that save her. But she'll be very poor again.' He came back to that idea persistently.

'She'll marry somebody and be rich.' A sudden thought came and made her ask Airey, 'Would you marry for money?'

He thought long, taking no notice of the bill beside him. 'No,' he said at last, 'I shouldn't care about money I hadn't made.'

'A funny reason for the orthodox conclusion!' she laughed. 'What does it matter who made it as long as you have it?'

Airey shook his head in an obstinate way. Tommy Trent, just entering the doorway, saw him lay down three or four notes; he did not look at the bill. The waiter with a smile gave him back one, saying '*Pardon, monsieur!*' and pointing to the amount of the account. Tommy stood where he was, looking on still.

'Well, I must go,' said Trix, rising. 'You've given us a great deal of pleasure; I hope you've enjoyed it yourself!'

The waiter brought back the bill and the change. Airey scooped up the change carelessly and gave back a sovereign. Tommy could not see the coin, but he saw the waiter's low and cordial bow. He was smiling broadly as he came up to Airey.

'Business done, old fellow? We must see Mrs. Trevalla into her carriage.'

'Good-bye to you both,' said Trix. 'Such an evening!' Her eyes were bright; she seemed rather moved. There was in Tommy's opinion nothing to account for any emotion, but Airey Newton was watching her with a puzzled air.

'And I shall remember that there's no such thing as being poor or unsuccessful,' she laughed. 'We must thank Mr. Childwick for that.'

'There's nothing of that sort for you anyhow, Mrs. Trevalla,'

said Tommy. He offered his arm, but withdrew it again, smiling. 'I forgot the host's privileges,' he said.

He followed them downstairs, and saw Airey put Trix in her carriage.

'Good-bye,' she called wistfully, as she was driven away.

'Shall we stroll?' asked Tommy. The night was fine this time.

They walked along in silence for some little way. Then Airey said:—

'Thank you, Tommy.'

'It was no trouble,' said Tommy generously, 'and you did it really well.'

It was no use. Airey had struggled with the secret; he had determined not to tell anybody—not to think of it or to take account of it even within himself. But it would out.

'It's all right. I happened to get a little payment to-day—one that I'd quite given up hope of ever seeing.'

'How lucky, old chap!' Tommy was content to say.

It was evident that progress would be gradual. Airey was comforting himself with the idea that he had given his dinner without encroaching on his hoard.

Yet something had been done—more than Tommy knew of, more than he could fairly have taken credit for. When Airey reached Danes Inn he found it solitary, and he found it mean. His safe and his red book were not able to comfort him. No thought of change came to him; he was far from that. He did not even challenge his mode of life or quarrel with the motive that inspired it. The usurper was still on the throne in his heart, even as Trix's usurper sat still enthroned in hers. Airey got no farther than to be sorry that the motive and the mode of life necessitated certain things and excluded others. He was not so deeply affected but that he put these repinings from him with a strong hand. Yet they recurred obstinately, and pictures, long foreign to him, rose before his eyes. He had a vision of a great joy bought at an enormous price, purchased with a pang that he at once declared would be unendurable. But the vision was there, and seemed bright.

'What a comforting thing impossibility is sometimes!' His reflections took that form as he smoked his last pipe. If all things were possible, what struggles there would be! He could never be called upon to choose between the vision and the pang. That would be spared him by the blessing of impossibility.

Rare as the act was, it could hardly be the giving of a dinner which had roused these new and strange thoughts in him. The vision borrowed form and colour from the commonest mother of visions—a woman's face.

Two or three days later Peggy Ryle brought him seven hundred pounds—because he had a safe. He said the money would be all right, and, when she had gone, stowed it away in the appointed receptacle.

'I keep my own there,' he had explained with an ironical smile, and had watched Peggy's carefully grave nod with an inward groan.

CHAPTER IX.

BRUISES AND BALM.

GOSSIP in clubs and whispers from more secret circles had a way of reaching Mrs. Bonfill's ears. In the days that followed Mr. Liffey's public inquiry as to who Brown, Jones, and Robinson might be, care sat on her broad brow, and she received several important visitors. She was much troubled; it was the first time that there had been any unpleasantness with regard to one of her *protégés*. She felt it a slur on herself, and at first there was a hostility in her manner when Lord Glentorly spoke to her solemnly and Constantine Blair came to see her in a great flutter. But she was open to reason, a woman who would listen; she listened to them. Glentorly said that only his regard for her made him anxious to manage things quietly; Blair insisted more on the desirability of preventing anything like a scandal in the interests of the Government. There were rumours of a question in the House; Mr. Liffey's next article might even now be going to press. As to the fact there was little doubt, though the details were rather obscure.

'We are willing to leave him a bridge to retreat by, but retreat he must,' said Glentorly in a metaphor appropriate to his office.

'You're the only person who can approach both Liffey and Chance himself,' Constantine Blair represented to her.

'Does it mean his seat as well as his place?' she asked.

'If it's all kept quite quiet, we think nothing need be said about his seat,' Blair told her.

There had been a difference of opinion on that question, but the less stringent moralists—or the more compassionate men—had carried their point.

‘But once there’s a question, or an exposure by Liffey—piff!’ Blair blew Beaufort Chance to the relentless winds of heaven and the popular press.

How did he come to be so foolish?’ asked Mrs. Bonfill in useless regretful wondering.

‘You’ll see Liffey? Nobody else can do anything with him, of course.’

Mrs. Bonfill was an old friend of Liffey’s; before she became motherly, when Liffey was a young man and just establishing the ‘Sentinel,’ he had been an admirer of hers, and, in that blameless fashion about which Lady Blixworth was so flippant, she had reciprocated his liking; he was a pleasant witty man, and they had always stretched out friendly hands across the gulf of political difference and social divergence. Liffey might do for Mrs. Bonfill what he would not for all the Estates of the Realm put together.

‘I don’t know how much you know or mean to say,’ she began to Liffey, after cordial greetings.

‘I know most of what there is to know, and I intend to say it all,’ was his reply.

‘How did you find out?’

‘From Brown, a gentleman who lives at Clapham, and whose other name is Clarkson. Fricker’s weak spot is that he’s a screw; he never lets the subordinates stand in enough. So he gets given away. I pointed that out to him over the Swallow Islands business, but he won’t learn from me.’ Mr. Liffey spoke like an unappreciated philanthropist. The Swallow Islands affair had been what Fricker called a ‘scoop’—a very big thing; but there had been some trouble afterwards.

‘Say all you like about Fricker——’

‘Oh, Fricker’s really neither here nor there. The public are such asses that I can’t seriously injure Fricker, though I can make an article out of him. But the other——’

‘Don’t mention any public men,’ implored Mrs. Bonfill, as though she had the fair fame of the country much at heart.

‘Any public men?’ There was the hint of a sneer in Liffey’s voice.

‘I suppose we needn’t mention names. He’s not a big fish, of course, but still it would be unpleasant.’

'I'm not here to make things pleasant for Farringham and his friends.'

'I speak as one of your friends—and one of his.'

'This isn't quite fair, you know,' smiled Liffey. 'With the article in type, too!'

'We've all been in such a fidget about it.'

'I know!' he nodded. 'Glentorly like a hen under a cart, and Constantine fussing in and out like a cuckoo on a clock! Thank God, I'm not a politician!'

'You're only a censor,' she smiled with amiable irony. 'I'm making a personal matter of it,' she went on with the diplomatic candour that had often proved one of her best weapons.

'And the public interest? The purity of politics? Cæsar's wife?' Liffey, in his turn, allowed himself an ironical smile.

'He will resign his place—not his seat, but his place. Isn't that enough? It's the end of his chosen career.'

'Have you spoken to him?'

'No. But of course I can make him. What choice has he? Is it true there's to be a question? I heard that Alured Cummins meant to ask one.'

'Between ourselves, it's a point that I had hardly made up my mind on.'

'Ah, I knew you were behind it!'

'It would have been just simultaneous with my second article. Effective, eh?'

'Have you anything quite definite—besides the speculation, I mean?'

'Yes. One clear case of—well, of Fricker's knowing something much too soon. I've got a copy of a letter our gentleman wrote. Clarkson gave it me. It's dated the 24th, and it's addressed to Fricker.'

'Good gracious! May I tell him that?'

'I proposed to tell him myself,' smiled Liffey, 'or to let Cummins break the news.'

'If he knows that, he must consent to go.' She glanced at Liffey. 'My credit's at stake too, you see.' It cost her something to say this.

'You went bail for him, did you?' Liffey was friendly, contemptuous, and even compassionate.

'I thought well of him, and said so to George Glentorly. I ask it as a friend.'

'As a friend you must have it. But make it clear. He resigns in three days—or article, letter, and Alured Cummins!'

'I'll make it clear—and thank you,' said Mrs. Bonfill. 'I know it's a sacrifice.'

'I'd have had no mercy on him,' laughed Liffey. 'As it is, I must vamp up something dull and innocuous to get myself out of my promise to the public.'

'I think he'll be punished enough.'

'Perhaps. But look how I suffer!'

'There are sinners left, enough and to spare.'

'So many of them have charming women for their friends.'

'Oh, you don't often yield!'

'No, not often, but—you were an early subscriber to the "Sentinel."'

It would be untrue to say that the sort of negotiation on which she was now engaged was altogether unpleasant to Mrs. Bonfill. Let her not be called a busybody; but she was a born intermediary. A gratifying sense of power mingled with the natural pain. She wired to Constantine Blair, 'All well if X. is reasonable,' and sent a line asking Beaufort Chance to call.

Chance had got out of Dramoffskys prosperously. His profit was good, though not what it had been going to reach but for Liffey's article. Yet he was content; the article and the whispers had frightened him, but he hoped that he would now be safe. He meant to run no more risks, to walk no more so near the line, certainly never to cross it. A sinner who has reached this frame of mind generally persuades himself that he can and ought to escape punishment; else where is the virtue—or where, anyhow, the sweetness—that we find attributed to penitence? And surely he had been ill-used enough—thanks to Trix Trevalla!

In this mood he was all unprepared for the blow that his friend Mrs. Bonfill dealt him. He began defiantly. What Liffey threatened, what his colleagues suspected, he met by angry assertions of innocence, by insisting that a plain statement would put them all down, by indignation that she should believe such things of him, and make herself the mouthpiece of such accusations. In fine, he blustered, while she sat in sad silence, waiting to produce her last card. When she said, 'Mr. Fricker employed a man named Clarkson?' he came to a sudden stop in his striding about the room; his face turned red, he looked at her with a quick furtive air. 'Well, he's stolen a letter of yours.'

'What letter?' he burst out.

With pity Mrs. Bonfill saw how easily his cloak of unassailable innocence fell away from him.

She knew nothing of the letter save what Liffey had told her.

'It's to Mr. Fricker, and it's dated the 24th,' said she.

Was that enough? She watched his knitted brows; he was recalling the letter. He wasted no time in abusing the servant who had betrayed him; he had no preoccupation except to recollect that letter. Mrs. Bonfill drank her tea while he stood motionless in the middle of the room.

When he spoke again his voice sounded rather hollow and hoarse.

'Well, what do they want of me?' he asked.

Mrs. Bonfill knew that she saw before her a beaten man. All pleasure had gone from her now; the scene was purely painful; she had liked and helped the man. But she had her message to deliver, even as it had come to her. He must resign in three days—or article, letter, and Alured Cummins! That was the alternative she had to put before him.

'You've too many irons in the fire, Beaufort,' said she with a shake of her head and a friendly smile. 'One thing clashes with another.'

He dropped into a chair, and sat looking before him moodily.

'There'll be plenty left. You'll have your seat still; and you'll be free to give all your time to business and make a career there.'

Still he said nothing. She forced herself to go on.

'It should be done at once. We all think so. Then it'll have an entirely voluntary look.'

Still he was mute.

'It must be done in three days, Beaufort,' she half-whispered, leaning across towards him. 'In three days, or—or no arrangement can be made.' She waited a moment, then added, 'Go and write it this afternoon. And send a little paragraph round—about pressure of private business, or something, you know. Then I should take a rest somewhere, if I were you.'

He was to vanish—from official life for ever, from the haunts of men till men had done talking about him. Mrs. Bonfill's delicacy of expression was not guilty of obscuring her meaning in the least. She knew that her terms were accepted when he took his hat and bade her farewell with a dreary heavy awkwardness

On his departure she heaved a sigh of complicated feelings : satisfaction that the thing was done, sorrow that it had to be, wonder at him, surprise at her own mistake about him. She had put him in his place ; she had once thought him worthy of her dearest Trix Trevalla. These latter reflections tempered her pride in the achievements of her diplomacy, and moderated to a self-depreciatory tone the reports which she proceeded to write to Mr. Liffey and to Constantine Blair.

Hard is the case of a man fallen into misfortune who can find nobody but himself to blame ; small, it may be added, is his ingenuity. Beaufort Chance, while he wrote his bitter note, while he walked the streets suspicious of the glances and fearful of the whispers of those he met, had no difficulty in fixing on the real culprit, on her to whom his fall and all that had led to it were due. He lost sight of any fault of his own in a contemplation of the enormity of Trix Trevalla's. To cast her down would be sweet ; it would still be an incentive to exalt himself if thereby he could make her feel more unhappy. If he still could grow rich and important although his chosen path was forbidden him, if she could become poor and despised, then he might cry quits. Behind this simple malevolence was a feeling hardly more estimable, though it derived its origin from better things ; it was to him that he wanted her to come on her knees, begging his forgiveness, ready to be his slave and to take the crumbs he threw her.

These thoughts, no less than an instinctive desire to go somewhere where he would not be looked at askance, where he would still be a great man and still be admired, took him to the Frickers' later in the afternoon. A man scorned of his fellows is said to value the society of his dog ; if Fricker would not have accepted the parallel, it might in Chance's mind be well applied to Fricker's daughter Connie. Lady Blixworth had once described this young lady unkindly ; but improvements had been undertaken. She was much better dressed now, and her figure responded to treatment, as the doctors say. Nature had given her a fine poll of dark hair, and a pair of large black eyes, highly expressive, and never allowed to grow rusty for want of use. To her Beaufort was a great man ; his manners smacked of the society which was her goal ; the touch of vulgarity, from which good birth and refined breeding do not always save a man vulgar in soul, was either unperceived or, as is perhaps more likely, considered the hall-mark of 'smartness' ; others than Connie Fricker

might perhaps be excused for some confusion on this point. Yet beneath her ways and her notions Connie had a brain.

Nobody except Miss Fricker was at home, Beaufort was told; but he said he would wait for Mr. Fricker, and went into the drawing-room. The Frickers lived in a fine, solid, spacious house of respectable age. Its walls remained; they had gutted the interior and had it refurnished and re-bedecked; the effect was that of a modern daub in a handsome antique frame. It is unkind, but hardly untrue, to say that Connie Fricker did not dispel this idea when she joined Beaufort Chance and said that some whisky-and-soda was coming; she led him into the smaller drawing-room where smoking was allowed; she said that she was so glad that mamma was out.

‘I don’t often get a chance of talking to you, Mr. Chance.’

Probably every man likes a reception conceived in this spirit; how fastidious he may be as to the outward and visible form which clothes the spirit depends partly on his nature, probably more on his mood; nobody is always particular, just as nobody is always wise. The dog is fond and uncritical—let us pat the faithful animal. Chance was much more responsive in his manner to Connie than he had ever been before; Connie mounted to heights of delight as she ministered whisky-and-soda. He let her frisk about him and lick his hand, and he conceived, by travelling through a series of contrasts, a high opinion of canine fidelity and admiration. Something he had read somewhere about the relative advantage of reigning in hell also came into his mind, and was dismissed again with a smile as he puffed and sipped.

‘Seen anything of Mrs. Trevalla lately?’ asked Connie Fricker.

‘Not for a week or two,’ he answered carelessly.

‘Neither have we.’ She added, after a pause, and with a laugh that did not sound very genuine, ‘Mamma thinks she’s dropping us.’

‘Does Mrs. Trevalla count much one way or the other?’ he asked.

But Connie had her wits about her, and saw no reason why she should pretend to be a fool.

‘I know more about it than you think, Mr. Chance,’ she assured him with a toss of her head, a glint of rather large white teeth, and a motion of her full but (as improved) not ungraceful figure.

'You do, by Jove, do you?' asked Beaufort, half in mockery, half in an admiration she suddenly wrung from him.

'Girls are supposed not to see anything, aren't they?'

'Oh, I dare say you see a thing or two, Miss Connie!'

His tone left nothing to be desired in her eyes; she did not know that he had not courted Trix Trevalla like that, that even his brutality towards her had lacked the easy contempt of his present manner. Why give people other than what they want, better than they desire? The frank approval of his look left Connie unreservedly pleased and not a little triumphant. He had been stand-offish before; well, mamma had never given her a 'show'—that was the word which her thoughts employed. When she got one, it was not in Connie to waste it. She leant her elbow on the mantelpiece, holding her cigarette in her hand, one foot on the fender. The figure suffered nothing from this pose.

'I don't know whether you've heard that I'm going to cut politics?—at least office, I mean. I shall stay in the House, for a bit anyhow.'

Connie did not hear the whispers of high circles; she received the news in unfeigned surprise.

'There's no money in it,' Beaufort pursued, knowing how to make her appreciate his decision. 'I want more time for business.'

'You'd better come in with papa,' she suggested half-jokingly.

'There are worse ideas than that,' he said approvingly.

'I don't know anything about money, except that I like to have a lot.' Her strong hearty laughter pealed out in the candid confession.

'I expect you do; lots of frocks, eh, and jewels, and so on?'

'You may as well do the thing as well as you can, mayn't you?'

Chance finished his tumbler, threw away his cigarette, got up, and stood by her on the hearthrug. She did not shrink from his approach, but maintained her ground with a jaunty impudence.

'And then you have plenty of fun?' he asked.

'Oh, of sorts,' admitted Connie Fricker. 'Mamma's a bit down on me; she thinks I ought to be so awfully proper. I don't know why. I'm sure the swells aren't.' Connie forgot that there are parallels to the case of the Emperor being above grammar.

'Well, you needn't tell her everything, need you?'

'There's no harm done by telling her—I take care of that; it's when she finds out!' laughed Connie.

'You can take care of that too, can't you?'

'Well, I try,' she declared, flashing her eyes full on him.

Beaufort Chance gave a laugh, bent swiftly, and kissed her.

'Take care you don't tell her that,' he said.

'Oh!' exclaimed Connie, darting away. She turned and looked squarely at him, flushed but smiling. 'Well, you've got——' she began. But the sentence never ended. She broke off with a wary frightened 'Hush!' and a jerk of her hand towards the door.

Mrs. Fricker came sailing in, ample and exceedingly cordial, full of apologies, hoping that 'little Connie' had not bored the visitor. Beaufort assured her to the contrary, little Connie telegraphing her understanding of the humour of the situation over her mother's shoulders, and laying a finger on her lips. Certainly Connie, whatever she had been about to accuse him of, showed no resentment now; she was quite ready to enter into a conspiracy of silence.

In a different way, but hardly less effectually, Mrs. Fricker soothed Beaufort Chance's spirit. She too helped to restore him to a good conceit of himself; she too took the lower place; it was all very pleasant after the Bonfill interview and the hard terms that his colleagues and Liffey offered him. He responded liberally, half in a genuine if not exalted gratitude, half in the shrewd consciousness that a man cannot stand too well with the women of the family.

'And how's Mrs. Trevalla?' Evidently Trix occupied no small place in the thoughts of the household; evidently, also, Fricker had not thought it well to divulge the whole truth about her treachery.

'I haven't seen her lately,' he said again.

'They talk a lot about her and Lord Mervyn,' said Mrs. Fricker, not without a sharp glance at Beaufort.

He betrayed nothing. 'Gossip, I daresay, but who knows? Mrs. Trevalla's an ambitious woman.'

'I see nothing in her,' said Connie scornfully.

'Happily all tastes don't agree, Miss Fricker.'

Connie smiled in mysterious triumph.

Presently he was told that Fricker awaited him in the study, and he went down to join him. Fricker was not a hard man out of hours or towards his friends; he listened to Beaufort's story with sympathy and with a good deal of heartfelt abuse of what

he called the 'damned hypocrisy' of Beaufort's colleagues and of Mrs. Bonfill. He did not accuse Mr. Liffey of this failing; he had enough breadth of mind to recognise that with Mr. Liffey it was all a matter of business.

'Well, you sha'n't come to any harm through me,' he promised. 'I'll take it on myself. My shoulders are broad. I've made ten thousand or so, and every time I do that Liffey's welcome to an article. I don't like it, you know, any more than I like the price of my champagne; but when I want a thing I pay for it.'

'I've paid devilish high and got very little. Curse that woman, Fricker!'

'Oh, we'll look after little Mrs. Trevalla. Will you leave her to me? Look, I've written her this letter.' He handed Beaufort Chance a copy of it, and explained how matters were to be managed. He laughed very much over his scheme. Beaufort gave it no more explicit welcome than a grim smile and an ugly look in his eyes; but they meant emphatic approval.

'That's particularly neat about Glowing Stars,' mused Fricker in great self-complacency. 'She doesn't know anything about the trifling liability. Oh, I gave her every means of knowing—sent her full details. She never read 'em, and told me she had! She's a thorough woman. Well, I shall let her get out of Dramoffskys rather badly, but not too hopelessly badly. Then she'll feel virtuous—but not quite so virtuous as to sell Glowing Stars. She'll think she can get even on them.'

'You really are the deuce, Fricker.'

'Business, my boy. Once let 'em think they can play with you, and it's all up. Besides, it'll please my womankind, when they hear what she's done, to see her taken down a peg.' He paused and grew serious. 'So you're out of work, eh? But you're an M.P. still. That's got some value, even nowadays.'

'I shouldn't mind a job—not this instant, though.'

'No, no! That would be a little indiscreet. But presently?'

They had some business talk and parted with the utmost cordiality.

'I'll let myself out,' said Beaufort. He took one of Fricker's excellent cigars, lit it, put on his hat, and strolled out.

As he walked through the hall he heard a cough from half-way up the stairs. Turning round, he saw Connie Fricker; her finger was on her lips; she pointed warily upwards towards the

drawing-room door, showed her teeth in a knowing smile, and blew him a kiss. He took off his hat with one hand, while the other did double duty in holding his cigar and returning the salute. She ran off with a stifled laugh.

Beaufort was smiling to himself as he walked down the street. The visit had made him feel better. Both sentimentally and from a material point of view it had been consoling. Let his colleagues be self-righteous, Liffey a scoundrel, Mrs. Bonfill a prudish woman who was growing old, still he was not done with yet. There were people who valued him. There were prospects which, if realised, might force others to revise their opinions of him. Trix Trevalla, for instance—he fairly chuckled at the thought of Glowing Stars. Then he remembered Mervyn, and his face grew black again. It will be seen that misfortune had not chastened him into an absolute righteousness.

As for the kiss that he had given Connie Fricker, he thought very little about it. He knew just how it had happened, how with that sort of girl that sort of thing did happen. The fine eyes not shy, the challenging look, the suggestion of the jaunty attitude—they were quite enough. Nor did he suppose that Connie thought very much about the occurrence either. She was evidently pleased, liked the compliment, appreciated what she would call 'the lark,' and enjoyed not least the sense of hoodwinking Mrs. Fricker. Certainly he had done no harm with Connie; nor did he pretend that, so far as the thing went, he had not liked it well enough.

He was right about all the feelings that he assigned to Connie Fricker. But his analysis was not quite exhaustive. While all the lighter shades of emotion which he attributed to her were in fact hers, there was in her mind also an idea which showed the business blood in her. Connie was of opinion that, to any girl of good sense, having been kissed was an asset, and might be one of great value. This idea is not refined, but no more are many on which laws, customs, and human intercourse are based. It was then somewhat doubtful whether Connie would be content to let the matter rest and to rank his tribute merely as a pastime or a compliment.

(To be continued.)

ALMS FOR OBLIVION.

BY RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.

II.

TRAVELS OF A GERMAN PRINCE IN SPAIN AND ENGLAND IN THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Time hath, my Lord, a wallet on his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion.

Troilus and Cressida.

THERE can have been but few German princes who in the sixteenth century thrice visited Spain. Nor, even in the age of Henry VIII., can it have been common for a prince to propose marriage successively to seven princesses, be rejected by six, and find his suit frustrated in the seventh instance by parental opposition. Neither can it often have happened that at the eighth attempt the prince so little in Hymen's good graces should at the age of fifty-three have won the hand of a princess of fifteen. All these circumstances, however, with many others of much singularity, concurred in the eventful history of Frederick II., Elector Palatine. Our present concern is solely with his adventures in Spain and his brief visit to England—pilgrimages of which we should have known nothing but for his factotum and historiographer Hubertus Thomas, surnamed Leodius from his birth at Liège. Leodius's account of the Prince's sayings and doings for seventy-three years, though evidently leaving much untold, is a mine of interest and information into which many shafts besides ours might be sunk, and deserves to rank among the most conspicuous instances of a valuable book becoming 'alms for oblivion.'

The adage 'Like master like man' fails in the case of the Elector and his retainer. The former (born December 9, 1482) was a characteristic specimen of the young German bloods of his day—handsome, thoughtless, extravagant, self-indulgent, devoted to jousts and athletic exercises, of whose hardships and dangers he was always ready to take his full share, and from which he did not escape unscathed. Though careless and headstrong, he does not seem to have wanted sense; his deficiency in learning was attributed by himself to the severity of his masters. Leodius

concurr, and (with the unanimous assent of the learned world) subjoins that it is no small part of the character of an erudite prince to reward erudition in others, as Frederick would undoubtedly have done if he had not been so horribly in debt. And, in fact, it is but just to record that in Frederick's latter years, after he had become Elector, the University of Heidelberg was much indebted to him. His biography, as narrated by Leodius, falls into three portions, the pre-matrimonial period, while he is pursuing princesses under ever-increasing embarrassments and discouragements; the days of marriage, while he is still the cadet of an electoral house running to and fro in hopes of coaxing something out of more opulent princes; and his electoral period (1544-1556), when he has to front grave questions of policy, and, without serious conviction, to make up his mind whether he will be Catholic or Protestant. On the whole, an unlucky, ineffectual person, an example in his latter days of joviality stunted and geniality turned sour, in framing whose destiny Nature and Fortune had been sadly at odds. The biographer is quite another kind of being—an old confidential servant, not too devoted to his master to grumble at his infirmities and hint at his ingratitude, but really loyal and faithful in his plodding way. Having been a *Kammergerichtsrath* he is a thorough man of business, and his racy Latinity attests literary power, if falling short of the standard of accomplished scholarship.

The future Elector's first visit to Spain was made in 1502, in the train of the Archduke Philip I., father of Charles V., bound to the court of his formidable father-in-law Ferdinand the Catholic. The account given of it by Leodius is so graphic and circumstantial as evidently to proceed from an eye-witness, though, as he was only seven years old at the time, it can at most have been rewritten by the historian himself. The way lay through France, where the travellers, looking in upon Louis XII., who, though crippled with gout, entertained them at a ball, beheld his Majesty playing for stakes of many thousand crowns at a game of cards most popular in that day, says Leodius, writing fifty years afterwards. He adds that it was still played, and known as *fluere*, in the vernacular *flua*, a word surviving in English to this day as a *flush* at cribbage. He also remarks upon the difference between the methods of hunting in France and Germany, which may be compendiously expressed by terming the former a *chase* and the latter a *drive*. On entering Spain the august party was received

with songs and dances by Basque girls, whose heads Leodius positively asserts to have been shaved in defiance of Apuleius's verdict that a bald Venus would not commend herself even to her own Vulcan. The burden of their Euskarian ditties was to the effect that all Biscayan damsels were fully as noble as Philip himself, and that it consequently behoved him to give them something wherewith to spend a happy day. A curious parallel to the Irish ballad of the wren caught on St. Stephen's day—

Although he is little, his family's great.
Ladies and gentlemen, give us a *trate*.

King Ferdinand was found at Madrid, amusing himself with hawking at cranes, and giving proof of great temperance and endurance in the pursuit of his favourite sport. From Madrid the royal party proceeded to Barcelona, where they were received with a display of fireworks, magnificent for that age. Leodius's description, and his very particular account of the *ex papyro factæ machinulæ*, known to us as rockets, should not be overlooked by the historians of pyrotechnics. The fiery glories of Barcelona, however, were outdone at Perpignan, which welcomed Philip on his way home with a grand representation of various passages of sacred history, and one which will not be found there—namely, the storming of the infernal regions by an army of white-robed angels. The demons' dresses were embroidered with gold and silver. Most curiously anticipating Milton, the infernal hosts defended themselves by artillery, indistinguishable from real cannon, but in fact constructed *ex papyro* (which perhaps should here be understood as pasteboard), and crammed to the muzzle with rockets. These were discharged all together with such effect that earth, air, and sky seemed to be in simultaneous conflagration, and when the smoke had cleared away nothing could be more startling than the utter disappearance of the gorgeous show, unsubstantial as Prospero's.

There is no trace of any personal connection between Leodius and Frederick for twenty-four years, until, in 1526, he tells us that he was appointed the Prince's secretary upon his second Spanish expedition, undertaken with the double object of vindicating his brother the Elector from the imputation of having conspired against the Emperor Charles V., then in Spain, and of inducing his Imperial Majesty to pay his debts; both, especially the latter, commissions of delicacy and difficulty. Frederick was

now to find the difference between travelling in Spain in the retinue of the heir apparent to the kingdom and having to depend upon his own resources. After passing the Pyrenees the journey is the record of a constant struggle for the necessities of life, as soon, at least, as the party had finished the enormous carp they had laid in at Bayonne, which Leodius protests weighed no less than thirty-six pounds—a fish proper to be cooked in the wine-jar they subsequently found at Ocana, wherein, for want of a tub (*quia Hispania tota fere ligno caret*), seven of the Prince's suite bathed together. On reading his account of the nakedness of the land, the great emigration to America which at this time was draining Spain of her life-blood appears no less intelligible than similar phenomena in Scotland. It does not appear whether the travellers enjoyed the consolation of Pascasius Justus, who observes in his treatise 'De Alea' (1560) that he had often found a Spanish village without victual or drink, but never one without a pack of cards.

The first of the *Cosas de España* which presented itself to the attention of the travellers was a battle-field near Pampeluna, white with the unburied bones of Frenchmen slain in the preceding year. At Cervera, where they halted a day, the magistracy waited upon them to request them to move on before they should have devoured everything in the town, and the public flocked in to contemplate dining Germans as great natural curiosities. At Matalabres the fields were traversed by rustics, men, women, and children in a state of nudity, flagellating themselves in the hope of extorting rain from the compassion of Heaven. At a town which Leodius calls Gomorrah, probably meaning Gomara, his confiding master despatched him with orders to buy 'a mule-load of butter'; he might just as well, like the injured lady in 'The Mysteries of London,' have 'sent out the servant for a pint of prussic acid.' 'A mule-load of butter!' exclaimed the *aromatarius*, 'there is not so much in all Castile; how should there be, when we have no grass? If you want butter you must go to Estremadura, whence we import as much as we require for dressing sores, for which it is, indeed, a sovereign remedy.' And in proof of the assertion he produced a goat's bladder filled with a substance resembling waggon-grease. In the next town there was provender but no fuel, and Leodius and the cook, sacrilegiously trying to pull a beam out of the ceiling of the parish church, nearly brought the entire roof upon their heads. A little farther

on the party were honourably received by the local authorities, who quartered them upon a wealthy inhabitant, who produced a single silver cup for the whole company. Dinner over, the host locked the cup up in a casket, and thinking that no one had seen him, made a great clamour, affirming it to be lost. When taken to task, he positively refused to open the casket, declaring that he would submit to the loss a thousand times over rather than put up with such an insult. An alguazil was summoned, the cup was found in the coffer, and the host was left studying to find something to say in his defence.

The goal of the Prince's journey was Granada, where the Emperor Charles V. was then residing. To reach this city it was necessary to penetrate the defiles of the Sierra Morena, where occurred the adventures of the serpents and the Spanish venison, which Leodius shall narrate in his own words.

'There are no villages hereabout,' he says, 'and no inns, except those built by the Government to provide travellers with shelter for the night. Sometimes there is a host inside these caravanserais, and sometimes not. The Prince, therefore, sent me on ahead to procure, if possible, necessaries against his arrival. Passing through a vast desert, I arrive at an inn called Evolla, and find the innkeeper within. He says he has room enough and food enough for us all, and promises wine of surpassing coolness, and salted and smoked venison. I taste and find the venison excellent, and the wine colder than ice. I hasten back to the Prince with the good news; he comes on, and we have a capital supper. By-and-by, however, the Prince learns that the coldness of the wine is owing to the flagons being immersed in a lake full of serpents. Upon this he resolves to put up with the calidity of the wine he has brought with him, but orders the remainder of the venison to be packed up, and resumes his march at midnight, leaving me to pay the bill. The host brings it, and I read, "so much for the donkey." "Donkey," I exclaim; "what donkey?" "The donkey your worships had for supper." "I thought it was venison." "Venison! and how should we have venison, seeing that we have no deer?" And opening the door of a cupboard, he displayed an undeniable leg of a newly slaughtered donkey hanging up. "We hunt them with dogs and think them very good." The bill was paid, but neither the Prince nor his suite partook further of the cold donkey, which they had relished so highly under another name. Leodius adds that the Spaniards of this

region pursued game with poisoned arrows, probably a custom adopted from the Moors.

The next day Leodius and the butler, being sent forward to reconnoitre, found themselves without provisions under a blazing sun in a frightful desert without grass or tree. 'I shall die,' quoth the butler, 'I am dying, I am dead. Leave me in the middle of the road that the Prince may see me when he passes, and give sepulture to my poor remains.' Leodius lifts up his eyes and beholds an ancient ruin with a tree sprouting out of it. The tree proves to be a mulberry tree, and the fruit brings the fainting travellers back to life. 'Whence,' he says, 'I have ever since had a special esteem for mulberries, and acknowledge that I owe my life to them.' Like an Arctic voyager, he builds a little cairn and leaves a notice of the existence of the mulberries for the Prince, who takes full advantage of it. 'I cannot,' he adds, 'omit another singularity of this part of our journey. Before arriving at the banks of the Guadiana, we passed through many brakes and thickets, among which grew shrubs bearing red flowers. We hastened to put them into our hats in the German fashion, when country people, seeing from a distance what we were about, ran up crying to us to throw them away, saying that they were aconite, and that we should all be poisoned if we did not alight and rub our hands with earth, which we did right vigorously. They say that this is the place where Hercules dragged Cerberus to the upper world, and that the aconites were engendered by the slaver of that infernal quadruped. They also show the caves where he stalled the oxen he had taken from Geryon, which fable I conceive to denote the great paucity of cattle in Spain, Hercules having carried them all off to Italy.'

Notwithstanding Leodius's lamentations on this topic, bulls must have existed in Spain after the days of Hercules (from which circumstance the naturalist infers the existence of cows also), inasmuch as when Rodrigo Borja was elected Pope, the inhabitants of his native town celebrated the event by giving a bull-fight on a Sunday. It is strange that Leodius only in one place alludes to this national amusement. This notice of the tauro-machic sport occurs in connection with the Prince's arrival at Granada, just in time for the festivities with which the recovery of the city from the Moors was annually celebrated. The bull-fight, however, if such it may be called, appears not to have been of the orthodox pattern, but rather of that represented in a

humorous picture attributed to Velasquez, and recently shown at the Spanish exhibition at the New Gallery, when, after the regular sports were over, a bull was turned loose among the crowd. On this occasion seven bulls were so treated and baited with dogs into the bargain, the sport culminating in their destruction after they had themselves occasioned the deaths of some few of the Spanish public. All of which was considered exactly as it ought to be. This humane entertainment was followed by one of more refinement, in which the Emperor himself took part—the equestrian contest of the *djerrid*, borrowed by the Spaniards from the Moors, and frequently described by Oriental travellers. Even this spirited and graceful amusement was fatal to one of the cavaliers engaged, upon which the Empress, who watched the proceedings from a balcony, sent word to the Emperor that it seemed time to leave off; which suggestion, Leodius hints, was by no means unwelcome to him. *Quod ille lubens annuit.*

Leodius represents Granada as the largest and most populous city in Spain, a credible statement, considering the extent of its silk manufactures, until folly and bigotry destroyed them in the following century. It must have worn a thoroughly Oriental aspect with its Moresque palaces, its bazaars resembling Cairo and Damascus, and its narrow streets obstructed with chains at night. There was scarcely one house without a lemon-tree and a fountain, although drinking-water was chiefly supplied by the river Darro, whose salubrity was vaunted by the Spaniards and gravely questioned by Leodius, seeing that it killed the Prince's physician. Leodius himself was grievously afflicted with some complaint of the nature of colic, and, ungratefully deserted by his master on his departure, might, he thinks, have died on the floor but for the accidental return of the Prince's barber to look for something forgotten. This illegitimate son of Æsculapius afforded relief by a dose of *nescio quid de suis catapotiiis* (pills), and completed the cure by the exhibition of roasted kid with oranges and vinegar, washed down with generous wine. One is reminded of Peacock's prescription for Shelley's ailments: 'Three mutton chops, well peppered.'

Having failed to extract anything from the Emperor, the Prince and his retinue returned by way of Toledo, encountering at Almagro, it is interesting to learn, a branch of the great Fugger bank, which supplied them with every necessary. At Toledo the traveller notes the ruins of the aqueduct and amphi-

theatre, the hundred and fifty towers, the seventeen markets, the ancient school of magic, now shut up, the narrow streets, the superiority of the private dwelling-houses, four thousand of which possess inner courts, the use of vine-stalks for fuel for want of wood, the ten thousand weavers of silk and wool, and the six thousand who get their livelihood by vending water. With their families these would represent nearly twenty thousand persons, or about as much as the entire present population of Toledo. This, contrasted with the desolate condition of the rural districts, suggests that the aggregation of the population in towns is not entirely a modern phenomenon. If anything further of note occurred during the return to France, Leodius omits to record it.

Frederick's next expedition to Spain was undertaken in 1538. It was principally prompted by the desperate state of his pecuniary affairs, and the hope that the Emperor would assist him in a claim he had preferred to the Danish throne in right of his wife, or at least quiet him with a Spanish viceroyalty. He had married a daughter of the dethroned tyrant Christian, and his wife and his wife's female jester were of the party. The season was winter, and upon their arrival in Biscay the travellers found themselves obliged to contend with a new description of hardships. Blinded by snow, buffeted by tempests, now taking shelter in caverns, now in woods, they made their way with the greatest difficulty through the mountains, the faithful secretary pulling his master up the steeps with a stick, and the Prince sliding down on the other side with the staff between his legs. The Princess was continually falling, but displayed a most courageous spirit. The voyagers struggled through everything, and arrived at a town *tam debiles quam virgines*, in British parlance, 'as weak as a cat.' A characteristically Spanish scene occurred at this place, where the Alcalde, being asked what he considered due to him for the entertainment he had provided for the party, replied that he was as noble as the Prince himself, and should consider it derogatory to accept anything; but, upon being taken at his word, straightway presented a demand for seventy crowns, which the Prince had to pay, impotently threatening vengeance on his arrival at court. A pleasing contrast was presented by a grateful Spaniard to whom Leodius had done some small kindness in Germany, who insisted on carrying him off to his house, more below the ground than above it, but containing a hare, a capon, and a brace of partridges.

Leodius's description of this amiable family is truly idyllic. The Señora was pleased to say that all Germans were honourable and high-minded men; the son tramped home through the snow laden with *mala Arecontica* (which we are unable to define, unless there is some allusion to the story of Acontius and Cydippe), olives, and capers; the master of the house quoted Xenophon and gaveLeodius good advice. It seems surprising that a native of the North should have needed to learn from a Spaniard to wear a veil in a desert of snow, and not to go to bed in his boots, but such appears to have been the case. This piece of wintry mountaineering cost the Prince altogether five hundred crowns, and conveyed the painful impression that he was leaving more money in Spain than he was ever likely to take out of it. Through the favour of the Empress, nevertheless, he obtained a monthly allowance from Charles V., for the support of his retinue at Toledo, and when after a while the Imperial treasurer became unruly, and the hopes of a Spanish viceroyalty dissolved into air, he received seven thousand ducats to take him home: nearly all of which, however, was spent in Spain to very little purpose.Leodius, importing æsthetic enthusiasm into money matters, thought to please the Prince by drawing his attention to the beauty of the broad pieces, double ducats every one, and fresh, it may be, from some American mine. The Prince answered that he could not comprehend how anybody could care for money for its own sake, that his sole concern with it was to spend it, and that he purposed to lay this out upon a pilgrimage to Compostella. If he ever went there,Leodius either did not accompany him or has suppressed the particulars.

Such a peregrination might have been distasteful to the secretary on other than financial grounds, for indications are not wanting of his inclination to the Reformers' doctrines. This may perhaps have led him to depict Spanish bigotry in too forbidding hues; yet, with every allowance, there is sufficient proof of its hideousness. In one town the travellers lodged for some time at the house of a widow whose husband had been lately burned on an accusation of secret Judaism. If, saysLeodius, the accused person denies the charge, he is burned, but his family retain his goods. If he confesses, he goes to the galleys, and his property is confiscated. There is but one way of escape, if he should allege that he has malicious enemies, and name the very persons who have brought the accusation, he may be acquitted, but otherwise

the accusers are for ever unknown to him. When, afterwards, certain persons took umbrage at the attention paid to the Prince and his suite at the Emperor's own court, their readiest weapon was an imputation of heresy grounded on the most frivolous indications; but to the Spanish mind German and Lutheran were almost convertible terms. At one time the charge was that some of them had gone out of church and come back. It was pointed out that the Spaniards habitually did the same. 'Yes, but the Spaniards are not Germans.' At another time a poor German who had gone upon his knees at the passing of the Host was collared by a *sacrificulus*, who denounced him as a heretic because he had not laid down a parcel he was carrying. On appeal to the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, a liberal ecclesiastic, his Eminence said that such things must needs be, and that the remedy was to keep away from divine service altogether. But this advice must on no account be revealed, or he himself might be accused of heresy, as actually happened to the next but one of his successors in the archbishopric. The Emperor said nearly the same thing, but added that when he got more authority he hoped to rectify this and some other matters. At present he must be upon his guard; certain of his subjects were wont to call him 'Flemish swine.' In fact, observes Leodius, many of them disputed his right to the throne during the life of his mother, the mad Juana. This anecdote helps to explain how the unimpeachably orthodox Philip II. was able to destroy the liberties of Spain, and why Granada and Toledo are no longer great cities.

Before his return to Germany, the Prince was persuaded by letters from Henry VIII. himself to visit England, where the Germans were just then in high favour on account of the negotiations for the King's marriage with Anne of Cleves. Leodius himself had previously visited England on an errand of his master's, had been most kindly received by Cromwell, and had had long conversations with Henry, who, in support of his proposition that the English were no wise inferior to the Germans as toppers, emptied at one draught a flagon of beer for which the envoy, 'trying it in wine,' required four. From the references in the State Papers calendared in the Rolls Series, the Prince's visit appears to have been the subject of speculation for some time before it took place. Foreign ambassadors were dying to find out all about its object, whether to recommend a bride to Henry VIII., or to seek aid for his father-in-law, the deposed Christian, or to promote his

nephew's marriage with the Princess Mary. The latter was all but effected, but at a later period, and not by Frederick's instrumentality. It would have produced no political result, as the poor young Prince, a mere bundle of diseases, died in 1548.

Giving the Spanish Viceroy of the Netherlands the slip, the Prince and his suite, after a week's detention at Calais, ostensibly for a fair wind, but really for the permission of the King of France, one September day in 1539 entered the port of Dover, and were received with such a salute 'that the coasts of England were blotted out by smoke, and the flashes dazzled our eyes as it were with lightning.' The party were taken charge of by Lord and Lady Lisle, friendly and liberal hosts, until, arrived in London, they were consigned to a wealthy merchant, whose especial care it was to guard against their spending a penny, alleging that if he suffered this the King would certainly behead him. Like almost all other old travellers, Leodius tells us nothing of London except its sights, the Tower and Westminster Abbey. The Abbey tombs impressed him, but the Prince, an ardent sportsman, was grievously disappointed at being unable to see a famous pair of antlers of twenty-eight points, a trophy of victory over France, and asserted to have belonged to a stag taken by King Dagobert, which wore a golden collar engraved with an inscription testifying that the noble animal had been captured and released by Julius Cæsar. The excuse was that the King had removed it, fearing lest it should be stolen by the monks. Perhaps they had been beforehand with him. Dean Stanley is silent on the subject.

Although King Dagobert is actually the hero of a memorable legend about a stag,¹ there seems no reason for connecting the Westminster antlers with him. They more probably belonged, or were supposed to have belonged, to the stag captured by Charles VI. of France, equipped, as was gravely asserted, with a collar and inscription emanating from Julius Cæsar, according to which the antlered patriarch would be in about the fifteen

¹ His prowess as a sportsman, nevertheless, does not seem to be highly estimated by the author of the '*Chanson du Roi Dagobert*':—

King Dagobert went to the chase,
And far o'er hill and dale did race.
'Methinks, my liege,' a courtier saith,
'Your Majesty is out of breath.'
'No wonder,' says the King, says he
'A hare was running after me.'

hundredth year of its age. The incident is attributed to a time so near the English Conquest that the horns would be extremely likely to cross the Channel as spoil of war. The idea of the collared stag at large came down from antiquity, is recorded in connection with Alexander the Great, and is found in Petrarch :

Libera farmi al mio Cesare parve.

Neither did the antlers turn up at Windsor, where the Prince and his retinue were splendidly entertained in company with the ambassadors who had come upon the inauspicious match with Anne of Cleves. Carpets, though mentioned in a letter of Lady Lisle's, were not yet in common use, and Leodius notes with amazement that not only the walls but the floors were covered with embroidered tapestry. There was every imaginable dainty, and every imaginable musical instrument. Some days later the Prince and the ambassadors picnicked with the King 'in a most pleasant valley by the Thames,' in huts constructed of green boughs, especially laurel, which Leodius says was very abundant in England. (It must be remembered that the laurel cannot be reared in Middle Germany.) As the guests were at luncheon, blasts upon the horn were heard, and deer appeared closely pursued by hounds. Encountering another party of huntsmen, who prevented their taking to the river, they were compelled to enter a long narrow passage leading to an open space, where they were either entangled in nets, or leaped the barriers, or were pulled down by the dogs. The sport lasted three hours, and resulted in the capture of thirty-four deer, which the King distributed among his guests.

Fortunately for the Prince, Henry was not yet undeceived as to the personal attractions of Anne of Cleves, and, in the mood befitting an ardent though elderly bridegroom, gave Frederick a viaticum of six thousand crowns. This is Leodius's statement. Lord Lisle says in a letter to Lady Lisle, 'The Palsgrave has received two thousand marks for his reward, no ill journey for him.' Lady Lisle bestowed a token which a true knight ought to have regarded as more precious. 'I send you,' she writes to her husband, 'my tooth-picker, which I thought to have given to the Palsgrave while he was here, but it was not then at my hand. Please present it to him. I send it because when he was here I did not see him wear a pen or call [quill ?] to pick his teeth with. Tell him I have had it seven years.' An infinite quantity of silver

plate was shown, but not presented; and the Prince conjectured that it was appropriated by *Grunvallus* (Cromwell). There is a most interesting notice of this ill-starred and enigmatic man, a figure less easy to realise than that of almost any other great English statesman. 'Cromwell,' says Leodius, 'suspecting that the King's favour towards him was too excessive to be durable, meditated flight from the kingdom, and, as I believe, wished to disclose his design to me, but Fate would not suffer him. For, while we were in London, he sent for me, and, taking me by the hand, led me up and down, now into halls and alleys, now into groves and gardens. Ever absorbed in thought, and seeming to have something upon his mind which he was desirous but afraid to express, he stopped from time to time and uttered broken words, and kept asking whether the Prince had any castles or districts which he would sell or let. At last he vehemently urged me to find some pretext for returning to England at Christmas, for my Prince's advantage and my own, and gave me a silver goblet for my wife, to bring him to my remembrance if he should ever come to Germany.' A graphic sketch, and historically important as showing that Cromwell entertained well-grounded apprehensions of his ruthless and capricious master even before the great misadventure with Anne of Cleves.

Frederick succeeded his brother as Elector Palatine in 1544. Always prone to visionary schemes, he vainly tried to obtain the throne of Denmark. His domestic policy was one of opportunism; he favoured the Reformation without openly espousing it, took arms against Charles V. and submitted to him, rejoiced in the deliverance of Protestant Germany by Maurice of Saxony without in any way contributing to it, and, if performing nothing memorable, might at all events say with Sieyès, 'J'ai vécu.' In 1555, at the age of seventy-three, he celebrated his jubilee, and here Leodius concludes his history with the wish that the Elector, whom he describes as still robust, may live to keep many more birthdays. This was not to be; he died on February 26 following.

Leodius seems to have died about the same time. Notwithstanding the liberties he has occasionally taken with his master, he appears to have entrusted his history to the Elector himself, for not only is it dedicated to him, but the MS. must have been deposited in the Electoral Library at Heidelberg, the pillage of which in the Thirty Years' War, fatal to so many books and

manuscripts, released this from its seclusion, and sent it forth upon the world. It fell into the hands of Joannes Ammonius, publisher at Frankfort, by whom it was printed in 1624, with a preface pointing out that Germany had now no need to envy France for her Comines. Partial as we are to Leodius, we cannot deem his work much more nearly on a par with Comines' in the republic of letters than his master with Louis XI. in the republic of Europe; but if infinitely less important in the departments of history and politics, he casts more light on the condition of manners and culture.

IN PRAISE OF BIRDS.

THERE are not many lovers of beautiful things that are not made continually to feel in their heart 'it is misery to love!' I do not mean the romance of love that belonged to our youth; *that* remains the same as ever, divinely happy, imperishably beautiful. But for such as know what it is to love and sympathise deeply with the lower creation—as it is called—they recognise at every turn the law, hard and fast like a law of Nature itself—causing that which most they love to become a source of greater pain than pleasure. Life would certainly be less hard for some of us did we not care as we do for God's creatures of the animal world. And this leads up to the love most fraught with pain—at least to members of the Society for the Protection of Birds—the love which is almost universal, the love of birds.

Much of our trouble must be thus explained: that while we know Nature to be so careful of the type that scarcely ever is it lost, the relentless persecution with which birds of all kinds are pursued does threaten the loveliest of their race with extinction and the world with the loss of its best charm on land and sea.

The love of birds is the earliest fancy of our childhood, the love which grows with our growth, and grows still warmer as we ourselves get older. And the older we are, the sorer the grief we have with it.

There is something so engaging, so strange, so unknowable about the birds. The attraction of them, I believe, is felt in some ways even more generally now than formerly; and it spreads in these days in wider circles. An observation I remember hearing from a friend one winter's day as we passed by a holly tree all scarlet with its fruit—a redbreast sitting in the midst and singing his little song—would scarcely be ventured now. My friend said, 'Do you *really* care for birds? They seem so dull to me!'

A dull world indeed it would be without them! In 'L'Oiseau,' by the French author Michelet, occurs a passage which might be thus translated: 'Human life becomes commonplace as soon as

man is no longer surrounded by the great company of birds—those innocent beings whose movement and whose voices and playfulness are like the smile of Creation.' In the country the wild birds are always about us, tame or shy, as the case may be. They always look quite young and happy, taking the liveliest interest in the grass and the flies, and in the labourer's work, or whatever happens to be going on in field or garden. We do not tire of admiring their grace and their quaint ways; and it is only when some blackbird uses 'the golden dagger of his bill' to dig out a poor worm from the lawn that—well, we look the other way! While free in the open air the birds seem never to be ill, never to die unless by accident; they are scarcely ever found 'self-dead'—not even under the bushes, where one might think they would often creep away to die. Only in the great frost three or four winters back in many places some were said to be starved to death, and lay dead upon the ground. In that year, even in gardens where food was regularly put out for them and their various tastes consulted, they starved in numbers. Green plover would come close about the very doors and windows, and yet refuse even the chopped meat and bread; and I fear it was a few thrushes and blackbirds who grew fat, and prevented the many sharing their feast.

Birds are for ever flitting in and out of the trees, or singing among the branches, or flying happily through the air—who knows whither? Once, for full seven years a black and white blackbird lived in peace in our garden; then suddenly the others began to attack him and pull out his feathers. We saw him no more; and the body of even *that* remarkably piebald bird was never found. The poet Burns may have had something of this in mind when he wrote:

Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing
That i' the merry month o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Where wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,
And close thy e'e?

The birds are ever round us, but we don't understand them much; and when kept prisoned for years in our cruel cages, cheering us by their song and liveliness, how often do they at last elude our best care, drop from the perch, and die, while we sadly feel we have known nothing about them all the time.

Matthew Arnold, in his pathetic lines on a dead canary, says—how truly too many of us might well confess—

Birds, companions all unknown,
Live beside us, but alone;
Finding not, do all they can,
Passage from their soul to man!
Kindness we bestow and praise,
Laud their plumage, greet their lays;
Still beneath their feathered breast
Stirs a history unexpressed;
What they want we cannot guess,
Fail to mark their deep distress,
Dull look on when death is nigh,
Note no change, and let them die.

Yet, little as we understand birds, they assuredly know pretty well all about us; and they never mistake their friends. A happy few there are, possessors of some kind of secret fascination, whom the whole world of birds will follow and will trust. Of this strange influence the naturalist Charles Waterton is known to have been a memorable example. When he walked in the woods the birds came out to meet him, settling on his shoulder, and coming to his call from any distance. It is told in his memoirs that when the good man died and his body was conveyed in a boat across the lake to the spot where his father was buried, and where he himself desired he might be laid in a sequestered nook of the park, a flight of birds suddenly appeared, gathering as it went, and followed the boat to its destination. The species to which these birds belonged is not recorded; most likely they were various. Many kinds of birds there are who hook themselves on to us as it were, in some strange, slight way, taking part as well as they can in the lives of their human neighbours. There is the swallow, herald of spring, who builds under our eaves or in corners of our windows and doorways. The first swallow is hailed with joy, for does she not bring summer from across the sea? In the Roman calendar, I believe, the only mention of natural history is that on February 24 swallows appear. (In France she is called 'the messenger of life,' and in Ireland 'the devil's bird.') Nightingales, who prefer the come and go of busy life, and delight to nest within sound of a railroad. Tomtits, whose pleasure it is to nest in our garden pumps or convenient letter-boxes near our gates. Sparrows—of course, they possess themselves of all. I know a first-rate gardener who, strange to tell, has a liking for them. 'Sparrows,' he says, 'have

more sense than parrots, only they can't speak.' Above all other birds, the robin, as all the world knows, shows most trust and confidence in us.

The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English robin,
The bird that by some name or other
All men who know thee call thee brother,
The darling of children and men.

In winter, if allowed to enter at door or window, the robin will come in, will warm itself on our hearthrug, and if permitted will roost every night, for weeks perhaps, perched somewhere in the room. It simply knows not what fear means in the garden when at watch over a man with a spade.

Last winter a robin tapped at our dining-room window, and insisted upon being let in. In the house it lodged and made itself at home until the April following. Every night the bird roosted in a different corner in a different room, upstairs or downstairs. Every day at breakfast and luncheon it hopped on to the table and feasted, helping itself largely to butter in the morning and to cake at luncheon, &c. The confidence shown by such a little thing in trusting itself among a household of large human people, was indeed touching. In February, when the family went south, the robin descended to the kitchen, living contentedly with the servants until wide-opened doors and windows proclaimed the spring.

But the most singular instance that I have known of a robin's fearlessness was the kind of military instinct, which some years ago led a pair to make their nest at the back of a target at Aldershot! It was in the shooting range of the 4th battalion of the 60th Rifles; and the Colonel of the regiment told me of it at the time. The little pair paid not the least attention to the shots thundering on the target just at the back of their nest. The soldiers were careful not to meddle with them, and the young brood hatched and were brought up in safety. (It may be hoped that they did not all hatch out stone deaf!)

Of ill-omened birds, so called, we need not say much, for it is only by the superstition of man that they are said to be so. It has nothing to do with their feeling for us. The handsome black and white magpie is nearly killed off from our woods and fields, and the coming generation will probably know little about its unlucky reputation, though they may chance to find in some antiquated book of north-country folk-lore, that the magpie was

the only bird who did not go into the ark with Noah. It preferred to sit outside on the roof, jabbering over the drowned world; and so it has been unlucky ever since. 'The boding raven,' however, still is likely to survive, since it has been pushed back by civilisation into solitary places and inaccessible crags. In one such haunt, the Raven's Craig, just above a wild lake in Inverness-shire, I have seen them hovering like black blots on the face of the cliff. I have not learning enough to know whether in the earliest times ravens were accounted 'unlucky.' If so, why were they chosen from among all the birds of the air for the merciful errand of carrying bread to Elijah in the wilderness? (Did they steal it? They are given to theft!) Also in the Written Word we are assured that 'God heareth the young ravens when they cry out unto Him.' And nothing of this is said of doves, or of any other white or heavenly kind of bird. An explanation is given in the Egyptian commentary on St. Luke, in the Coptic script by Epiphanius, A.D. 368-402. The passage¹ is certainly very curious, and I am permitted to transcribe it here. 'Why then did the evangelist mention no name amongst the birds except ravens only? Because the hen raven, having laid her eggs and hatched her young, is wont to fly away and leave them on account of the hue of their colour, for when hatched they are red in appearance. Then the Nourisher of all Creation sends to them a little swarm of insects, putting it by their nest, and thus the little ravens are fed until the colour of their body is, as it were, dyed and becomes black. But after seven days the old ravens return, and, seeing that the bodies of their young have become perfectly black like their own, henceforward they take to them and bring them food of their own accord.' It is for naturalists to ascertain whether or no this strange account of the young ravens holds good in our day.

It is a long step from the fourth century to the days of Shakespeare and 'Macbeth.' Lady Macbeth says:

. . . . The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.

Farther yet to the ballad quoted by Sir Walter Scott:

And thrice the raven flapped its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

¹ Translated by the Rev. George Horner.

The appearance of solitary birds in the Forum at Rome was believed to presage the death of Cæsar. Also 'the many-wintered crow' shares fully in the un-luck of blackness. In Plutarch's *Lives* it is told how Cicero went on shore, and entering his house, lay down to repose himself, and how a number of crows settled in the chamber window and croaked dismally in most doleful manner. 'One even entered in, and alighting on the bed, sought with its beak to draw off the clothes with which he covered his face. On sight of this the servants began to reproach themselves: "Shall we remain spectators of our master's murder? Shall we not protect him, so innocent and so great a sufferer, when the brute creatures give him marks of their care and attention?" They carried him towards the sea,' &c.

The downy-feathered, silent-flying bird of wisdom, the owl, is feared by many—'the obscure bird that clamours the livelong night.'

It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman
Which gives the stern'st good-night.

In India the white owl, however, always brings good luck. By the Hindoos it is held sacred to the goddess of prosperity; and for luck's sake it is welcomed to nest and breed in their houses, while the midnight cry of 'the Seven Sisters,' whoever those strange birds may be, makes those who hear it tremble.

Greater in number, as one likes to believe, are on the other hand the fortunate birds. There are few, let us hope, among our friends who have not, at some time in their lives, known the meaning of 'halcyon days.' The halcyon is thus described by Pliny: 'This bird, so noticeable, is little bigger than a sparrow. For the more part of her pennage, blew intermingled yet among with white and purple feathers. . . . They laie and sit in mid-winter when daies be shortest; and the times when they are broodie is called halcyon daies; for during that season the sea is calm and navigable, especially on the coast of Sicilie.' What visions of calm sea-born loveliness does the quaint old translation call up for us! And is there not a haunting music in these lines?

Blow, but blow gently, oh fayre winde,
From the forsaken shore,
And be as to the halcyon kinde
Till we have ferried o'er.

The Swan, in legend, is fortunate. In a poetic dream of the ancients it was the birds flying up and down the banks of the river

of Lethe that 'caught the names of the departed, and, carrying them for a little while in their beaks, let them fall into the river, where they would have been lost only that the swans watching near caught a few names and carried them to temples, where they were consecrate.' Amongst 'the fortunate birds,' the dove must be counted as supreme in its peaceful prestige. It is the type of gentleness and innocence, and of faithful, devoted love. And are we not exhorted to be 'wise as serpents and harmless as doves'? Every movement of the dove is full of grace. It is the emblem of Peace. (Alas, that in fairness we have to own the amazing fact of the parent doves' cruel and quarrelsome behaviour!) The drying-up of the waters after the flood was signified to Noah when the dove came to him in the evening, 'and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off.' To this day, year after year for love-seasons immemorial, the dove, when nesting, has carried flowers and leaves in her mouth. In gardens where these birds are allowed their freedom, they will often fly through the windows into the house, and carry off spoil from the flower-glasses. Pink is their favourite colour. I have often seen a pink sweetpea laid by the male dove tenderly across the neck of his mate as she sits on the nest. It happened only last summer in London, that early one morning a young lady, sleeping with the window open in an upper room in Lowndes Street, awoke to find a stray dove sitting at the foot of her bed—and the bird held a rose-leaf in its bill.

Instances of the old belief in birds and their human sympathies might well be multiplied. Aldovrandi (1527) tells us of the parakeet 'who so moved the heart of the Oriental emperor Basilius—the bird repeating for his condemned and incarcerated son, Leo, those lamentations it had heard from the sorrowing women—that Basilius again took his son to his bosom, leaving him his empire as an inheritance.' In more recent times there is the extraordinary tale, to be taken for what it is worth, of a parrot who served as chaplain in some ship, reciting prayers to the sailors, and afterwards telling the rosary! Then there is the legend of a white-breasted bird that is said to appear invariably in the death-chamber, when the death occurs of any member of the family it haunts.

In Dean Stanley's 'Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey,' it is recorded, concerning the funeral of Queen Mary II., 1695, that 'a robin-rebreast, which had taken refuge in the Abbey, was seen constantly on her hearse, and was looked upon with tender affection for its seeming love to the lamented queen.' And I may

be pardoned for quoting from one of the morning papers an incident which was remarked by many at Queen Victoria's funeral at Windsor on February 4, 1901: 'And then befell a thing so strange and beautiful as to almost pass belief. Just as the jewelled crown upon the coffin passed into the open air a dove flew out from over the chapel door. There it circled for a moment, when its mate flew out, and both together, those grey birds flew slowly side by side, over the quarters of the Military Knights and on towards the tomb at Frogmore.'

There is more to tell about birds than may be said in a day. Volumes might be filled with the wonders of their life-histories, with the endless story of their intelligence, their power of affection to man, or of devotion to their offspring. I have for long known the story of two incidents illustrating these two qualities in birds. The first¹ is told by a relative of my own, and happened many long years ago when she was a child. She writes:

'I was walking with my mother, when we were attracted to a small cottage by the exquisite singing of a thrush, which hung in a wicker cage outside the door. We stood listening, and then my mother entered and made acquaintance with the old couple within, asking would they be willing to part with the thrush to her? At first a blank look came over the old man's face; but he was poor and ailing, and at last a sum was named, the double of which was paid by my mother, who sent a servant next morning for the bird. Disappointment resulted. The cage was placed in our drawing-room window, but not a sound, not a note came from the melancholy thrush, who drooped and hung his head as if moulting. We fed it, we coaxed it; but it remained silent. My mother was indignant. She had not pressed the old people; she had but asked were they willing to sell the bird; she had given them double the sum asked; it looked as if another had been palmed off instead of the magnificent songster.

'We gave the thrush several days' trial, but at length we sent for its late owner. The door opened; in he came, hat in hand. My mother rose, armed with some mild rebuke. But neither could speak, for no sooner did the old man appear than the bird leaped down from its perch, spread its wings, and broke into so triumphant a song of joy that the whole room vibrated. "What, pretty Speckledy," said the old man approaching, "you know me, then, do you?" And the thrush kept flapping his wings, dancing with

From Mary Boyle's Autobiography.

joy. It was without a doubt the same bird, but, like the Hebrew captives, it could not sing in a strange land. "Take it back," said my mother; "I would not part such friends for all the world."

The other anecdote used to be told by the late Lady Elizabeth Villiers, and occurred on her own property in Holland. On a tree close to a house, within a short distance of the river or canal, there was a storks' nest, with young ones. The roof of the house caught fire one day; and though the flames did not actually reach the tree, the heat became scorching. So the mother stork flew down to the water, got into it, and drenched her breast; then, returning to her young, she spread the mass of cool wet feathers all over them. This she repeated over and over again, flying to the river, going down into the water, and returning, her plumage drenched with wet. And thus the nest was saved, and the tender nestlings were preserved alive until the fire had been got under and all was safe. The truth of this remarkable story was vouched for by more than one eye-witness.

One need not, indeed, be surprised at anything a bird does, when we consider the commoner everyday marvels of their unerring instinct, the whole mystery of their lives.

The Greeks believed that birds were created first of all things—'an airy ante-mundane throng'—and the Latin poet Lucretius held that it was from birds men first learned music. Matthew Arnold wrote:

Proof they give, too, primal powers
Of a prescience more than ours.
Teach us while they come and go
When to sail and when to sow.
Cuckoo calling from the wild,
Swallow trooping in the sedge,
Starling swirling from the hedge,
Map our seasons, make our year.

In all ages birds have been the poet's favourites. At the dawn of English poetry, half a thousand years ago, Chaucer, with his passionate love of Nature, says, in 'The Fowles' Assembly':

On every bough the birdes I heard sing
With voice of angel in their armonie,

and then he makes a list of about thirty-seven 'fowles,' with their personal characteristics, sketched in one or two lines each—done to the life, as none but a poet and acute observer of Nature could do; as, for instance, 'The false lapwing full of trecherie,' 'The cuckoo ever unkind,' 'The frostie feldefare,' and so on.

After Chaucer came other of our poets: a long procession whose praise of birds, enshrined in lovely thoughts and undying numbers, is left to us and to all time, a legacy of delight.

To name but a few amongst some of the best-known lines. Who can forget Keats's Nightingale?—

Light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green and shadows numberless
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

Or Wordsworth to the same sylvan minstrel?—

O Nightingale, thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart.
These notes of thine, they pierce and pierce,
Tumultuous harmony and fierce.
Thou sing'st as if the god of wine
Had helped thee to a valentine!

And in another exquisite little poem of Wordsworth's the Lark is

and
Ethereal minstrel, pilgrim of the sky,
Type of the wise, who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

Shelley, in his Ode to the Lark, addresses it as 'Thou scorner of the ground.' And F. Tennyson:

How the blythe lark runs up the golden stair
That leans through cloudy gates from Heaven to earth.

Stray fragments these, from rich stores of song, by poets inspired with 'all that ever was of joyous, clear, and fresh,'—by the music of those very skylarks that all the world orders without a pang as a dainty dish for dinner, whose bodies the careless crowd sees, and passes by unmoved, lying heaped in every poulterer's window or piled in open crates beside the door.

In an old bird-book of 1791 (in which, by the way, are figured in colour two sorts of dodo) we find that 'in the neighbourhood of Dunstable, 4,000 dozens of larks have been taken for the London market, between September and February.' (A trifle indeed, those 48,000, compared to the 116,000 humming-birds that were sold in London wholesale shops only a year or two ago for ornamenting ladies' attire!) If so many skylarks over a hundred years ago were required for the table or for confinement in cages, what must the consumption now be! The old book adds that 'in summer they fly and sing so much, and are so

much engaged in the care of their young, they are always lean.' Poor devoted little songsters! Nest and multiply as they may, a check must come sooner or later if the ever-increasing population of our cities persist in eating them; and even the blue heavens where they sing will at last be empty of their music. We are often assured that the larks sold for cooking are mostly fieldfares. This may be true, just in the same way that 'plovers' eggs are oftener jackdaws'!

In Lockhart's life of Sir Walter Scott it is told how, at the funeral of his daughter, the wild music of a lark singing in the sky above the open grave mingled with the solemn service for the dead, and how Scott's friend, Dean Milman, as he read the service, heard the singing and was profoundly touched. One does not read Milman much now, but he described the incident well in the little poem he wrote afterwards:

I watch thee lessening, lessening to the sight,
Still faint and fainter winnowing
The sunshine with thy dwindling wing,
A speck, a movement in the ruffled light,
Till thou wert melted in the sky,
An undistinguished part of bright infinity.

Mrs. Browning has a lovely thought about England and her migrant birds (I think it occurs in 'Aurora Leigh'):

Islands so freshly fair
That never hath bird come nigh them,
But from his course in air
Hath been won downward by them.

The name of wellnigh every English bird, whether common or unfamiliar, is found scattered throughout the best poetry of our land—immortalised in song. Burns has here and there an exquisite touch, such as:

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew all chilly on her breast,
Sae early in the morning. . . .

Tennyson knew well our birds, and loved them; and he watched them with the keenest observation. Browning also loved them. Everyone knows his lines about the thrush:

That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest we should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture.

The least observing of us all knows the joy of listening in the spring to those first delightful notes; and often would we express

our pleasure, if we could, with something of the tender charm of Mortimer Collins's lines to a thrush singing in the lime-trees—often would we say with him :

God's poet hid in foliage green
Sings endless songs himself unseen ;
Right seldom come his silent times.
Linger, ye summer hours serene !
Sing on, dear thrush, amid the limes !

Thou mellow angel of the air !
Closer to God art thou than I ;
His minstrel thou, whose brown wings fly
Through silent æther's sunnier climes.
Ah, never may thy music die !
Sing on, dear thrush, amid the limes !

That lover of the beautiful, Lord Leighton—himself an ardent and accomplished musician—delighted in the music of birds. I remember, years ago, at the time when people used to bore their friends by inducing them to catalogue their likes and dislikes in a tiresome drawing-room album, young Leighton wrote down as his greatest pleasure, 'To walk in the garden and listen to the birds singing.'

Amongst modern artists of fame, Landseer felt the joyous beauty of their wings, and painted them to the life. In the house where Landseer lived in St. John's Wood (since pulled down) there was a fresco, painted by him on the wall in the dining-room, of long-winged sea-gulls in undulating flight above a breaking sea. After him, Stacy Marks distinguished himself by his paintings of every species and kind of bird. Lear and others devoted their art to portraiture of the many-coloured parrots.

After dwelling thus on the true appreciation of birds by some of the first intellects of our time—and before—the contrast is sharp indeed when we turn to consider the manner of appreciation of them, common (especially with women) nowadays. For some of us the love of birds is accompanied by the intense pain of realising how their lives are everywhere wasted: a pain which must surely be unknown to the thousands who, without the least compunction, crown their heads with dead birds, and glory in that badge of cruelty—an egret's plume. This particular plume—'all imitation now,' the milliners say!—I never see, without thinking of the African tribe who carry within their mat of hair a store of some kind of feathers, and who, whenever they kill a man, take out a feather, dip it in his blood, and stick it on their head.

So the white egret plume, worn in hat or bonnet, is always to my fancy dyed red by the sacrifice of unhappy birds, bleeding and perishing near their desolated nests.

I was told a year ago by a London milliner, that 'ladies now refused to wear "ospreys,"' as she called them; 'so much had been said. But they were insisting on whole birds in their hats.' There will yet be enough for them—*while they last*. An estimate of the quantities still sold, I fear, in London alone, is nothing less than appalling. Amongst a number of other birds, 11,352 *ounces* of egret, and 110,490 humming-birds. No market in the world can long supply a demand so huge as this. Few need now to be reminded that the foolish word osprey, used in relation to plumes, is purely shopkeeper's ornithology. They mean egret—a name of most evil repute since the cruelties connected with the killing of them have been made public. Yet so ignorant is the world at large of the natural history of birds, that some are still taken in by the name. A very charming lady, whose hats are certainly guiltless of aught but ostrich feathers, stared with surprise when I explained that the milliner's osprey is in reality a small species of white stork, a native of Syria, Florida, and other hot countries. 'Why,' said she, 'I've seen them alive! and they are nothing of the sort. They are dark-coloured birds, like hawks; I saw them flying about a loch in Scotland; the gillie pointed them out to me, and he said they were ospreys!'

In London, when one sees the fashionable world of women driving about the streets or piously attending church service, in hats crowned with egret, or with long bird-of-paradise plumes bleached white and streaming in the wind, one marvels how it should be possible that these distinguished dames can possess minds so untrained—in a sense so uneducated—be so relentless, so lost to pity, as not to know or care whether whole races of birds, the loveliest and most innocent of created beings, be killed off (and mostly under circumstances of great barbarity), simply in order to make trimming for their hats!

I have wondered also if the ladies of 'London Society' are aware of the fact that they are by no means supreme in this deplorable fashion; if they really know that in the matter of feathers they are far outdone by their suburban and country-town imitators. Crossing a common near Windsor the other day, a girl on a bicycle passed me, wearing on her head about half-a-dozen long-winged kitty-wakes or sea-gulls. And am haunted

still by the nightmare of a lady (a very short lady) I met one day in Maidenhead, who wore two large pairs of broad white extended wings in front of her hat, with a kind of breastwork between them made of a large bunch of egret, mixed in with a bundle of non-descript feathers and down in black. I believe such an erection as this would be now (or at least not long ago) classed in a shop as 'elegant,' or 'chaste'! Suburban railway platforms are generally crowded with this sort of hat, piled up in feathers. And the fashion lasts till summer brings artificial roses to replace the bird-skins. It seems a little singular that apparently the only class who still habitually wear ostrich feathers—but never a bird-skin—are, or until recently were, the flower-sellers of Oxford Street and elsewhere. Their narrow means can scarcely account for it, for the rarest kingfisher or most brilliant ruby-crested humming-bird costs but fourpence! Thus it is, however. For my own part, I would a thousand times rather copy those poor drooping plumes of the London flower-girls—if plumes must be worn—than flaunt in the finest 'creation' of dried birds and egrets that the most fashionable of London shops could supply.

It is agreed by all, I believe, that any appeal to woman, as woman, to give up for humanity's sake any practice however cruel, if sanctioned by custom, is absolutely unavailing. As well attempt to melt with tears the core of the living rock!

An example, however, has been set by men; and in the army, egret plumes are ordered to be no longer worn. Yet women, who so readily emulate their brothers in sport or smoke, have failed to follow, whole-hearted, a lead like this.

To an increasing scarcity in foreign hat-birds, rather than to any appreciable decrease of demand, is due, one fears, the less universal wear of egret. I was lately told that while two years ago the going out after service at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, might be compared to a tempest of egret, last year only three or four were to be counted.

Could English women oftener seek to apply their hearts to the wisdom of showing mercy to their helpless little brothers and sisters the birds, or sometimes find a moment's time to think over the thousands of beautiful lines, in which our greatest poet-teachers have sung the praise of birds, could they less seldom remember this, they would surely entirely cease to follow the senseless dictates of fashion in feminine attire, before it is Too Late.

E. V. B.

A LONDONER'S LOG-BOOK.

XV.

I AM having an unusually pleasant Lent. There is a perceptible mitigation in that fury of church-going which in former years has seized Selina at this season. We no longer have High Tea on Wednesday and Friday, and I am not dragged off in a rickety four-wheeler to abnormal devotions at St. Alban's or St. Barnabas'. Selina, who thinks increasingly of her health, declares that for her own part she believes that to keep well is the first duty of a Christian, and that to have one's dinner in peace is really a much more religious act than to ruin one's digestion and catch endless colds by 'trampolining' away to churches a hundred miles off. In the substance, if not in the form, of this sentiment I seem to recognise an echo from my former self; but Selina has worked herself into believing that I and not she was responsible for those Lenten irregularities.

Meanwhile the excellent Soulsby is putting forth unusual exertions. On Ash Wednesday he announced to his congregation that, rightly considered, Lent was not so much a Fast as a Feast—yes, a Feast of Fat Things—oh, yes! a Banquet of Spiritual Delights. These delicacies are this year mainly provided by his own skill. He finds (as he tells us, with a modest pride which is peculiarly winning) that strangers, though incomparably greater men than he—deeper theologians, more arousing orators—yet cannot feel the pulse of the St. Ursula's congregation quite as accurately as one who has lived and loved and laboured in our midst for more than two long decades. Accordingly he is taking all the Lent sermons himself, with only very occasional aid from his old friend Jem Jawkins, whose chief delight is to escape from Loamshire and wag his head in a metropolitan pulpit. On Sunday mornings Soulsby is giving us a course of sermons on the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy. Last Sunday he enforced the duty of feeding the hungry with almost exaggerated earnestness. This emphasis rather nettled Selina, who remarked as we were walking home that if having Mr. Bumpstead to supper Sunday after Sunday wasn't 'feeding the hungry' she didn't know what was, and that

it would be more to the point if Mr. Soulsby would preach on the Seven Deadly Sins,' and give his Curate a hint about gluttony. I confess I thought this outburst a little unfair on Bumpstead, who certainly works hard for his victuals, and is fully justified in 'doing himself honourably' (the phrase is his own) when the faithful entertain him. Nor do I think that Selina would have expressed herself with quite so much vivacity if Bertha had been with us; but the dear girl had just popped in to see Mrs. Soulsby, who is recovering from a domestic crisis. Well may poor Soulsby say, with picturesque emotion, 'The blessings of the man who hath his quiver full of them are mine in rich abundance.'

So marked is the abatement of Selina's zeal for the Church, its ministers, and its ministrations, that, did I not know her principles to be firmly grounded, I might begin to feel a little uneasiness. Long experience has taught me to avoid unnecessary questions, but I maintain my lifelong habit of observation and form my own conclusions. In the small 'third room' on the drawing-room floor which she uses as a boudoir—a snug apartment consisting of two windows, a door, and a fire-place—I occasionally cast my eye on the current literature which my womankind affect. There I find the 'Queen,' the 'World,' 'Classy Cuttings,' and the 'St. Ursula's Parish Magazine,' which are my Selina's oracles; and the 'Table-Tennis and Pastimes Pioneer,' which Bertha takes in. This journal announces as its aim 'to advance the best interests of a popular game, and to secure for it its rightful place among those international sports which have so great a bearing upon the building up of Great Empires.' There I learn that at the Second Ping-Pong Tournament at Queen's Hall 'long rallies in a spirited encounter between Miss Florence Lacy and Mrs. Alfred drew loud applause yesterday afternoon, while much enthusiasm was also evoked by Miss Violet Farr's cruel smashes, Miss Lily Weisberg's demon deliveries, and Miss Helena Maude Smith's back-hand returns.' Such is the literature, 'lambent yet innocuous,' which delights my wife and her sister; but great was my consternation when the other day I found added to the collection a pamphlet entitled 'The Wonders of Thought-Force.' The title startled me. Since she was vaccinated, Selina has lost all fear of small-pox, declares that she was a goose for giving way to Dr. Snuffin's nonsense, and affirms her belief that, if people would only set to work the right way, they could be perfectly healthy without any doctors' abominations. True it is that Grape-nuts have proved a

failure, and the Salisbury Treatment has palled; but I am not free from apprehension that she is turning her mind in directions even less compatible with orthodoxy. This I trace to the influence of young Lady Farrington (*née* Sally Van Oof), who, I feel certain, has given her the pamphlet on 'Thought-Force,' setting forth the miraculous cures of physical and mental ailments effected by Helen Wilmans Post, Sea Breeze, Florida, U.S.A.

From that pamphlet I cull two or three quotations—'racy,' as Pennialinus would say, of the Great Republic—and of that 'high faith' which Mr. Lowell commended.

John M. White, North Wales, Pa., S.S.—Mrs. Wilmans Post,—I most cheerfully give you my testimonial of the great good you have done me by your absent treatment. Five years ago I was a physical wreck beyond the reach of the best medical doctors, as five years of experience proved. I went to the best doctors to be found here and in Philadelphia, and as a last resort I went before a clinic of doctors and the late Prof. Pepper, at the University of Pennsylvania, and they all pronounced my case incurable, as they said the stomach *was gone*; therefore nothing to build on; then I gave up in despair until I found one of your circulars, and, like a drowning man, grasped it, and I bless the event ever since, for you built me up beyond my hopes—yes, saved my life. To-day my stomach can digest almost any kind of food, and I am in high hope of being a stronger man than ever I was. As you know, my case was a desperate one, and I had lost all interest in life.

Ermine J. King, 318 York Ave., Chicago, Ill., S.S.—To whom it may concern,—I have for the last five months been receiving absent treatments from Helen Wilmans Post, for ailments which the medical profession could not reach, and I have received great benefit from the same, and I believe that Mrs. Wilmans Post is doing a great good through the power of her kindly, uplifting thought. She is a true healer in every sense of the word, and the treatments are well worth the modest sum which she accepts for them.

Mary C. Wiley, Columbia, S.C., S.S.—Mrs. Wilmans Post,—I am so glad that I can say I am better of my nervousness and weakness. I think your treatment the most wonderful thing! I study daily to learn more about it. I don't think another dose of medicine will ever pass my lips. All your reasoning is so natural and good. The truth proves as I never saw it before. How can anyone doubt when you prove everything? I assure you I watch you with a jealous eye—have seen nothing but your wonderful truth and love.

Mrs. B. C. Copeland, Evansville, Ind., S.S.—I can truly say that I have been successfully treated and *cured* by you of diseases that the old-school doctors have failed to cure, and even went so far as to say I could *not* be cured. I am now almost 72 years of age and am feeling well, and can stand more work than the generality of younger people, and people who do not know me take me to be about fifty years of age. And in truth I must give the power of your mind the honour and credit of all my good health and youthful appearance. Ten years ago I was a perfect wreck—could not walk any distance without stopping for breath and strength. I now can walk miles with comparative ease.

Mrs. Jane Walker, Petrolia, Cal.—Many disorders: Weak lungs, diseased

bronchial tubes. Has been benefited beyond any power of medical aid. Is still improving. Thinks Mrs. Helen Wilmans Post stands first in the ranks of the magnanimous, and ahead in the world of advanced thought.

On the attractions of this system it were superfluous to enlarge. To have one's stomach restored to one after it was 'gone'; to be able to digest 'almost any kind of food'; never to need another dose of medicine; and to look fifty when one is really seventy-two, these are boons not lightly to be esteemed. But what most attracted the pensive taxpayer over whom an impending War-Budget begins to cast its shadow is Helen Wilmans Post's treatise on 'The Conquest of Poverty.' Of this its gifted authoress boasts, and probably with justice, that it is 'the most popular book in the range of mental science literature. It brings freedom to the mind, and through the mind to the body.' With a steadily decreasing income, and an expenditure pitched high enough to satisfy the social demands of Stuccovia, that is, indeed, a freedom devoutly to be wished, but not, I fear, to be attained.

As far as I can judge, none of these erroneous and strange doctrines has produced the slightest effect on Bertha. Indeed, that excellent girl has no inconsiderable share of the high and spirited perverseness which characterises the whole house of Topham-Sawyer. As Selina's zeal for Lenten church-going diminishes, Bertha's increases. As Selina hankers more and more after new and heterodox teachings, Bertha develops her bump of orthodoxy, and, encouraged by Bumpstead, wages remorseless war against heresy and schism. The local papers have lately reported a sermon preached at the 'Presbyterian Church of England' in Stucco Road by Mr. Ramshorn—the raw-boned young minister who supported me at Cashington's meeting last month. This youth, who was reared at North Berwick, thus effectively drew upon the memories of his youth: 'I am sure if you have ever paid any attention to the game you will be struck by the way in which the game of golf seems to reproduce the common scenes of life. Those of you who don't play may know that the great object is to put the little white ball into the little hole. And so long as you are short of that, if you don't do it—well, the other man does it before you. He has won the hole. And in doing this, when you come to what is called the "putting green," and you take your putt—it may be a beautiful putt, it may run straight for the hole, but if it stops short you will say to yourself, and your partner will say to you, 'Never up; never in. It is a beauty, but it wants legs.' And

that is just exactly the situation here—"not far from the Kingdom." You may be "lying dead" as we say. The next shot is sure to do it. "Never up; never in."

Bertha, herself no mean proficient with the club, stigmatised this illustration from one of her favourite games as absolutely profane; and sarcastically supposed that Mr. Ramshorn would soon be trying to get a spiritual meaning out of Ping-Pong. Bumpstead chimed in, saying that that kind of thing was well enough for the old Vicar, because he's a mystic and a thinker, and all that sort of game; but when that red-headed rotter from the Presbyterian shop went in for it, it was getting a bit too thick, and next time they met he'd give young Ramshorn a bit of his mind. The mention of the Presbyterian Church in Stucco Road reminds me of Miss Scrimgeour, the Scotch lady who a few months ago was distributing rhymed leaflets against 'The Coming of the Monks.' She has been on her rounds again quite lately, and created not a little emotion at the vicarage by dropping into the letter-box the following statement, which, being inscribed to 'H. H. H.,' 'in grateful recognition of his brotherly advances,' would seem to indicate some further development of anti-Sacerdotalism in our beloved Establishment.

WHY I AM NOT A CHURCHMAN!

Because the Triple Ecclesiastical Apostasy, made up of the Roman, Greek and Anglican hierarchies, though claiming to be the true church, is nothing better than the manufacture of a man-made and self-styled priesthood, whose object is by patronising the masses, and flattering the classes, to obtain political power, personal advantage, social prestige, public money, and control of the human conscience.

They, however, clearly prove the fraud and fallacy of their pretensions, by reversing the order and use of the Old and New Testaments, assuming by gorgeous ceremonial displays, in semi-pagan imitation of Jewish worship, to set forth the glorious gospel. Thus do they endeavour to entangle us in a yoke of bondage.

*What would be thought of a man who, investigating the beauties of some priceless gem, persisted in using a brick, or a frying-pan, for an eyeglass?*¹ Surely he would display the folly of a fool! yet are the wise of this world, who judge by the light of their own eyes, more foolish than he; when they attempt to read the Word of God, through the deceptive and obscuring optics of a formula of traditional canons, creeds, and catechisms, which have their origin in the corruptions of the dark ages of mediævalism, when—

Monks and Friars (rogues and liars)

Martyred faithful men,

And had they power, they'd light the fires,

And do the same again.

¹ The italics are ours.—ED.

While my womankind are thus absorbed in the high things of Science and Theology I have been taking a turn at Politics, which Bacon pronounced to be 'of all pursuits the most immersed in matter.' And if by 'matter' Bacon meant that particular form of matter which we call money, my experience quite tallies with his. The Primrose League, once a flourishing feature in the life of Stuccovia, has been voted a nuisance on account of the exactions which it levies. Poor Bounderley can no longer send indiscriminate cheques to all who apply, but has to pick and choose, and thereby has made enemies and lost his popularity. A temporary difficulty in getting their little accounts settled by the Tory M.P. has kindled a flame of Liberalism among the local tradesmen to whom Mr. Lloyd-George's most inflammatory rhetoric would have appealed in vain. Cashington for the moment carries all before him by dint of his brougham and his billiard-room, his wife's sables and son's chargers. 'There's money in the thing,' says the Liberal agent to his friend the Solicitor's clerk; 'only work it properly, and we're on velvet. Start a branch of the Liberal League. Make Rosebery President. Get Asquith down to blackguard Home Rule, and Grey to show up Free Trade, and the trick's done. Out goes Bounderley; enter Cashington; and, if I know my man, he means winning the seat, and keeping it—and that means spending money, my boy, or you and I don't know our business.'

I had written so far when an event occurred which knocked me, as the phrase is, all of a heap. I could not honestly affirm that it was wholly unexpected, and yet, as people say when their friends die of lingering illnesses, it was 'sudden at the last.'

Those who have the happiness to dwell in London will recollect that the evening of Thursday, March 6, was signalised by a fog which would have been thick for mid-winter.

Thursday is the evening when a social entertainment is always given at the Parochial Club. This entertainment is not intermitted in Lent, for Soulsby says that he would not impose on the youth of his flock a yoke which he at their age would have found grievous. 'Nay, my spiritual children shall not say in the dim hereafter that St. Ursula was a hard task-mistress, or their religion a thing of austerity and gloom.' So on Thursday evening the Club always provides a Variety Entertainment. Soulsby recites, Bumpstead boxes, Bertha sings, and Mrs. Soulsby (when she is

strong enough) plays the concertina. Cashington, who has suddenly developed a keen interest in our parochial life, has given us two lectures on 'Imperial Expansion' and 'A Protest against Gladstonianism'; and Bounderley, not to be outdone by his rival, has promised a Comic Sketch of the House of Commons, with Imitations of Lord Percy and Lord Hugh Cecil obstructing the Deceased Wife's Sister.

On the evening of March 6, Bertha was engaged to sing 'Drink, Puppy, drink,' and 'The Lost Chord.' She arrived under Selina's wing just before the boxing was over; and though, as a rule, 'Blazer' Bumpstead can take uncommonly good care of himself in a physical encounter, he was at that instant levelled to the earth by a converted coal-heaver, whose recent adhesion to the Club had been regarded as a beautiful result of Soulsby's Lenten eloquence. At the unexpected sight, Bertha grasped her sister's arm, and exclaimed in a voice made tremulous by emotion, 'Oh, Selina! dear Mr. Bumpstead will be killed!' It is true that when, a few minutes afterwards, that hero came up grinning and expressed himself as gratified by the epithet, Bertha altered the punctuation of her sympathy, and declared that she had said, 'Oh, Selina dear! Mr. Bumpstead will be killed!' But that good young man had heard the original version, and governed himself accordingly. On emerging from the Club at the conclusion of the entertainment, we found Stuccovia wrapped in a thick blanket of yellow fog. Selina hung on to me like grim death, and Bumpstead and Bertha disappeared together into the surrounding gloom. They emerged from it engaged. Our labours for our sister have not been in vain. Stuccovia has been fruitful while Loamshire was barren. Dear old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer will go down to her grave happy in the knowledge that her youngest daughter will some day reign at The Foxholes. Though Bertha is not marrying into *the* County, at least she is marrying into *a* County. Selina is unexpectedly enthusiastic, and Bumpstead keeps on murmuring, in a kind of rapturous chuckle, 'Good Old Fog.'

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

BISHOP CREIGHTON used to say that, apart from the founder of Christianity, no historical character gains on a nearer acquaintance; and certainly very small experience is needed to show how ruthlessly macadamising is the progress of Research, how the 'bad' men of our childhood are crushed up, and the 'good' men crushed down, till they meet in one monotonous level of moral mediocrity. But even Research has its compensations. What our heroes lose in dim grandiosity will be more than repaid to them in vividness and life, once the clear sunlight is let in; and Madame de Maintenon need not complain if more than one biographical Pygmalion had recently arisen to transform her chilly statue into flesh and blood.

For a long while the bizarre uniqueness of her career stood in the way of all attempt to see it in a rational light. Adventurers and ruling royal mistresses were common enough in the seventeenth century; but Madame de Maintenon was never a mistress, and is unlike the common run of adventuresses in that she rose by her virtues, not by her vices. And certainly virtue carried her further than ever vice did them. At the moment when the French Monarchy reached its zenith of splendour, she emerged from the very dingiest surroundings to become Queen of France in all but name—and that as wife of Louis XIV., the proudest and most kingly prince who ever occupied a throne. In her own day a triumph so amazing seemed to be due to more than natural causes. She herself attributed her whole success to the guiding Hand of God; while her enemies spoke of her reign as 'a mystery of iniquity,' and 'the most awful humiliation ever designed by Fortune—not here to say Providence—for the most arrogant of kings.' Even many latter-day historians have left her a figure unnecessarily mysterious, still clad in the same great cloak of sable draperies in which contemporaries describe her flitting through the galleries of Versailles. And it still seems a little sacrilegious to look at her as she really was—a woman of rather noble, and rather morbid, but still quite ordinary character, borne into greatness by the play of very extraordinary circumstances.

There was no particular reason why she should be otherwise. Hereditary genius—that modern apology for the fairy godmother—

never stood by her cradle ; the family were wholly undistinguished till her grandfather, Agrippa d'Aubigné, made a great name for himself, fighting by the side of Henry IV., in the later Wars of Religion. But he was a strange enough progenitor for a decorous Catholic lady—this tough, hard-living, old Huguenot—and a still stranger was her father ; vices, crimes, and imprisonments make up the whole of Constant d'Aubigné's life. Even his marriage bears the taint of the gaol. His wife was the daughter of his keeper, and gave birth to their illustrious child in Niort prison on November 27, 1635. Fortunately for herself, however, the young Françoise had little to do with her parents ; though she saw enough of her mother's misfortunes to convince her that marriage proves a curse to three-quarters of the human race. She was brought up by a Huguenot aunt, until a Catholic relative, one Mme. de Neuillant, got possession of her, in virtue of an order from the bitterly anti-Protestant Court, with a view to her conversion to the Roman Church. This lady's proselytising methods, being chiefly scanty fare and insufficient clothing, failed to impress a precocious maiden of fourteen ; Françoise thought it due alike to her conscience and her sense of self-importance to hold out, Bible in hand, until the priests had fairly worsted her in argument.

A couple of years later she was of marriageable age, and soon the strangest of suitors presented himself. Paul Scarron was a burlesque writer and coffee-house wit of great celebrity, but elderly, and so crippled by rheumatism as to be 'more like the letter Z than a man.' In such a marriage there could be no talk of affection. Scarron pretended only to a friendly interest in the handsome, clever, ill-used girl, and owned that his appearance as a bridegroom was the greatest poetical licence he ever took in his life. Françoise repaid him by becoming an admirable nurse, and equally admirable hostess to the miscellaneously polite society that gathered round his mattress-grave ; more than once, it is said, she managed to cover the absence of a joint from dinner by her fascinating stories. But she was strict enough in her behaviour ; and when Scarron died without a penny—'having sunk all his fortune in search of the philosopher's stone, or something else as practical'—it was only fair that her 'glorious and irreproachable poverty' should be lightened by a small pension from the Court.

Left a widow at twenty-five, she could for the first time taste the sweets of independence. Her pension just allowed her to live

in modest comfort; it is noticed, for instance, that she always burned wax-candles in her rooms, instead of the more usual tallow—no small consideration to a lady who hated the grime of shabby gentility almost as much as running into debt. But her charms could afford to be independent of wax-candles—while as to her dresses, her ingenuous old confessor once said that, plain as they were, there was somehow such *bonne grâce* about them that he felt attracted more than was right. For her social qualities Madame de Sévigné will answer; that incomparable judge of breeding found her company ‘delicious.’

Society, in fact, was now the one occupation of her life; *elle voyait furieusement du monde*, says a contemporary gossip. To the end of her days she was a votary of the art of conversation, and held (as all good talkers should) that it can only be really enjoyed among friends of the opposite sex. Without being learned or very brilliant, she had a lively intellectual curiosity, and was easily taken with new ideas. At this time she was much attracted to the high-flown, romantic notions of the *Précieuses*, the æsthetes of the age; later on, she became enthusiastic for Racine’s poetry and Fénelon’s mysticism. But her judgment always told her when to stop. She threw over Racine so soon as he was suspected of Jansenist heresy, and Fénelon long before he was condemned by the Church; nor did her *préciosité* ever become ridiculous—her language is always terse and graphic, if it smells a little of the lamp. Judgment, too, gave her that placid sense of her own deficiencies which goes to make the excellent listener; she boasted herself one of the few women left in France who dare confess that there were limits to her knowledge. Added to this, hers was the blessing of an equable temper, which never ‘philosophised over an air,’ or took offence at accidental slights; she was capricious enough to be interesting, and sufficiently reserved to make her friendship a distinction. But a stormy youth had left her with too much cynical shrewdness and self-dependence to allow of her ever being monopolised by any single person. ‘I could not love anyone I did not respect,’ she says, ‘and I know so much evil about those around me that it is the rarest of pleasures to be able even to praise them.’ It was to an abstract idea that Mme. Scarron’s heart was really given—to a craving, passionate, almost hysterical, for the world’s honour and esteem. ‘I never wished to be loved by any particular person,’ she wrote, late in life; ‘I wished to be thought well of by all. Honour was my folly,

honour was my idol, for which perhaps I am now punished by excess of greatness. Would to God I had done as much for Him as I have done for my reputation !'

This longing is the basis of the proverbial philosophy she afterwards condensed into copy-book headings for her girls. 'Discretion is the most hard-worked of the virtues.' 'Have nothing to fear, nothing to hide, and nothing to regret.' 'There is nothing so clever as never being in the wrong.' It explains her rather cynical courtship of the respectable ; 'to a young woman in my position,' she used to say, 'a respectable peeress cannot be dull.' It was the secret of worthier social successes. No one steered a more careful course than Madame Scarron between odious self-assertiveness and self-effacement ; no woman ever put greater constraint on herself to become *droite, douce, commode*. Sometimes there was not even need for constraint, and the æsthetic pleasure of the exercise became its own reward—as when she once amused herself by nursing a casual acquaintance through the small-pox, partly to test her own strength of purpose, partly to impress the world.

But no one can live wholly on such flaccid diet as esteem ; and Madame Scarron, having refused to love her neighbours, was fain at times to win some human sympathy by serving them. Out of her usual isolation she would suddenly plunge into ruthless self-sacrifice—so ruthless, indeed, that some of her early performances as a schoolgirl, and some of her later as the wife of Louis, recall that 'sensual lust of self-abnegation,' over which the doctors are wont to look grave. But in her best days this morbid element was translated into a restless, superabundant energy, that threw its whole forces into every trifle—just as other loveless women have washed floors with their empty hearts. We hear only of most practical services to deformed little children, like Madame de Chevreuil's daughter (whose legs she often left a party to bandage, because no one else could do it as well), or else to inexperienced brides like Madame d'Heudicourt, to whom she acted as an amateur housekeeper. 'Six o'clock never found me in bed, though the young mistress of the house seldom appeared before twelve. I used to give all the orders of the day, and set the carpenters and upholsterers to work, helping them with my own hands, whenever necessary. . . . I little thought that the first step towards my present astonishing greatness had been taken, when Madame de Montespan noticed my usefulness to our common friend.'

Such, however, was the case. A new and far vaster field was opened for the display of Madame Scarron's virtues when the moral frailties of Madame de Montespan led to her introduction to Louis XIV. In 1668 that lady's intrigue with her Olympian paramour began, and in due time a nurse was needed for the resulting children. Madame de Montespan proposed Madame Scarron, and Madame Scarron accepted a post then in no wise thought discreditable, least of all to ladies with a very narrow income. At first the existence of the children was kept secret, and their governess, with characteristic caution, had herself bled, so as not to blush at inconvenient questions. But in 1673 they were legitimised, and she appeared openly at Court. Next year the King's gratitude bought her the small estate of Maintenon, which carried a title with it. Henceforward she is *Madame de Maintenon*.

This present was Louis' first mark of favour to his future wife. He had begun by disliking her as a literary prude, and Madame de Montespan told him terrible stories of her temper—for contiguity had wrought its usual effects on two ladies so clever and so determined. But he was touched by her devotion to his children, especially to the eldest boy, the Duke of Maine—that bastard, says St. Simon, being the son of his loins, while the Dauphin was only his heir—and a correspondence sprang up between them during the summer of 1675, which she spent with the young Duke in the Pyrenees. Very little was enough to show him that he had cruelly misjudged her, and to incline his impressionable heart to make *amende honorable* in the opposite direction; that winter Madame de Sévigné's letters are full of his sudden interest in Madame de *Maintenant*. A twelvemonth later the interest had deepened into passion; she is pronounced his 'first or second friend.' By 1680 she had become 'the soul of this Court,' recognised as his 'chief confidante' both by Madame de Montespan and the Queen.

To this bare narrative of her triumphs contemporaries would add many notes of exclamation; to us it will seem less surprising that she rose than that she did not rise before. Louis had outgrown the sensualities of youth; in 1680 he was forty-two, she three years older, Madame de Montespan thirty-nine. She had all the qualities that suited him best, while only great beauty saved her rival from being a continual irritation to his nerves. The mistress possessed a brilliant intellect, but little sense; the homelier talents of the 'confidante' were built up on her tact and

self-control. Madame de Montespan had a bitter, caustic tongue, and proved in a rage a very 'tigress in ringlets': Madame de Maintenon was never out of temper, and only used her wit for purposes of flattery. Madame de Montespan, when other means of holding Louis failed, fled to love-philtres—some say even to poisons. Madame de Maintenon 'guided him into an unknown country, into an intercourse of friendship and conversation, where there was no intriguing and no constraint.'

Lastly, it must be remembered that Louis' conscience, though always tortuous and always torpid, was never wholly asleep; and it was to his conscience that Madame de Maintenon specially appealed. 'I accepted his friendship,' she says, 'to give him good counsels, break the chain of his mistresses, and lead him back to the Queen.' Nor is there room to doubt her absolute sincerity, though we might have wished her a little less self-consciously unselfish, less pleased at her triumph over Madame de Montespan. But neither Louis nor his wife was disposed to be critical. The neglected Queen blessed her as an angel sent from Heaven, and the King might have said to the second Esther what Racine's Ahasuerus says to the first:—

Je ne trouve qu'en vous je ne sais quelle grâce
Qui me charme toujours, et jamais ne me lasse—
De l'aimable vertu doux et puissants attraits . . .
Et crois que votre front prête à mon diadème
Un éclat qui le rend respectable aux dieux même.

The actual sharing of the diadem (in so far as Madame de Maintenon can ever be said to have shared it) was due to the very sudden death of the Queen in the summer of 1683. Louis soon found his position as a widower 'repugnant both to his inclinations and his habits,' and his passion for Madame de Maintenon had not had time to cool. So he decided on a secret marriage, which took place in an improvised chapel at Versailles in the dead of a January night of 1684.

Of the depth and endurance of his affection there can be no doubt. Madame de Maintenon's bitterest enemy, the Duchess of Orleans, declares again and again that he loved 'Old Madam Wish-wash' infinitely more than ever any of his mistresses. With her the case was different. Her second marriage proved the culmination of that crisis, so common in the characters of women, when the habits and certainties of youth have passed away, and life re-forms, with new necessities and fresh ideals.

Especially was this the case with her dominant passion for 'honour.' Ten years' experience of Versailles had lowered her (never very high) opinion of her fellow-creatures, till she cared no more for their esteem. What was the use of courting the praises of the virtuous where there was scarcely a virtuous tongue to praise? On the other hand, she could not live without appreciation; so she drifted slowly towards religion, in the hope of winning applause more worth the having from her Maker. But first there was a period of doubt and despondency, where she 'feared she was doing little credit either to herself or her confessor.' Only when the friendship with Louis began did this hesitation vanish; thenceforward all anxiety about her own soul was merged in the greater responsibility of his. The moral enthusiasm, with which she began, steadily deepened in intensity during the thirty-one years of their married life; she was an instrument of Providence for his regeneration—the keeper of his conscience in a literal sense—charged to 'encourage and console him, or, if it were God's pleasure, to grieve him with reproaches that none but she dare utter.' And as she grew older and feebler, she clung with more and more despairing energy to her mission; the one recurring burden of her letters is, '*Il me prend des frayeurs extrêmes sur le salut du Roi.*'

Yet it is difficult to believe that she ever governed the King, except in so far as a wife better than himself becomes the moral lode-stone of whatever good there is in a man—especially if he be such a man as Louis, always unusually responsive to the influence of women. To her fine-spun lectures on the Love of God (inspired by Fénelon and St. Francis of Sales) he preferred the 'metallic beliefs and regimental devotions' of his Jesuit confessor, Father La Chaise, who also managed the Church patronage—much to her disgust—on the truly Jesuit principle that saintliness is the poorest of recommendations to a bishopric. In secular matters she was still more helpless. Louis disliked her knowing much about business, and on the two recorded occasions when she ventured to remonstrate (once about his expenditure on building, once about his persecution of the Protestants) cut her very short—the last time with a curt reminder that she had begun life as a Protestant herself. Yet it may be doubted whether France lost much by Louis' inattention to his wife. When zealous young philanthropists like Fénelon tried to make her 'a sentinel in the midst of Israel'

and patroness of their schemes of social reform, she answered—truly enough—that she had neither taste nor talent for public affairs. The few political utterances in her letters are almost childishly sentimental ; typical of them is her enthusiasm for the restoration of the exiled Stuarts, due solely to the tearful and incompetent piety of James the Second's Queen. The most that can be claimed for her is a knowledge of the *molles aditus et tempora*, when the King would listen without disguise to things which his ministers could not well say at the Council-board. And perhaps, had a Walpole been forthcoming, she might have made a humbler Caroline of Anspach.

As it was, there is something infinitely pathetic in the contrast between her great aims and their petty realisation. Instead of ministering to Louis' spiritual, she had to be content with attending to his bodily health ; it was a triumph if she could restrain his truly royal appetite for strawberries and mushrooms, and 'teach him how to be ill.' It is true she had her fill of adulation from Versailles, where the King was for ever discovering little expedients for paying her semi-royal honours. St. Simon and the Duchess of Orleans grow pale with anger as they tell how—in a Court where spoons and cushions had a mystic significance, where the stool of the mere Duchess was carefully distinguished from the straight-backed chair of the Princess, and an armchair was the sacramental symbol of a reigning Sovereign—Madame de Maintenon's drawing-room was furnished with only two of these last, one for the King and one for herself. But both her enemies admit that she cared very little for such distinctions, and that nothing could be more modest than the place she took at the few State functions she attended.

But these uncoveted honours were bought at a heavy price. She herself said of her position that it had no neutral point, but must either intoxicate or crush ; and her letters leave us little doubt that the latter was its more usual effect. For this her husband was chiefly to blame ; autocratic inconsiderateness, joined to fanatical love of etiquette and order, had made him the most remorseless of domestic tyrants. At seventy-five, although racked by rheumatism from head to foot, she must still go with him to meets of the royal hounds ; for, as she says, 'no tastes are allowed here but the master's, and I must confess that stag-hunting was never one of mine.' At home she had to resign her-

self to 'die symmetrically of draughts,' since Louis' sense of the fitness of things could not tolerate a screen in front of her big, ill-fitting windows. He spent hours daily in the one large room that served her both for sitting in and sleeping; often he stayed there working with his ministers till it was time for her to go to bed. 'I call in my maids to help me to undress,' she says, 'knowing all the time that he is in a fever lest they should overhear something. I have to hurry almost to the point of making myself ill—you know how I have hated hurry all my life. Even when I have got to bed, my troubles are not yet over. Often I should like a warming-pan, but there is no maid within call, and the King never suspects that I want anything. Being master everywhere, and always doing what he likes, he has not the slightest notion how much others have to put themselves out in his service. Sometimes, during my heavy colds, I have choked down a cough until I was almost suffocated, and the minister in attendance has had to call his attention to it.'

If the King haunted her in the evenings, the minor royalties never left her alone by day. 'They think,' she said, 'that Vision of themselves is Beatific, and compensates for everything else.' It was seldom enough she sat down to dinner without having that elderly lout, the Dauphin, lolling speechless in a corner, or the King's brother, the Duke of Orleans, fidgeting round her with a shower of questions, as to why she took one dish and not another. Or else the young Duchess of Burgundy, wife of the Dauphin's eldest son, burst in with her ladies, and 'I am treated to an account of somebody's jokes, and somebody else's satirical speeches, and the good stories of a third, until I am ready to drop with fatigue at never hearing a word of sense. . . . At last they begin to drift away, but one of them has always something special—sure to be tiresome or unpleasant—to confide to me; either she has quarrelled with her husband, or been libelled, or else she wants me to ask for something from the King. . . . The curse of my life is that I have neither leisure nor occupation; no monastic Rule could be harder than Versailles.'

The one relief from this intolerable monotony was her great girls' school of St. Cyr, established by Louis within an easy distance of Versailles, as a kind of wedding present to his wife. She had always had a special taste for education, for which her leading qualities well fitted her; the old social elasticity and judgment, the old desire at once to influence and to sacrifice herself for

others, all reappear in her little informal lectures to the mistresses.

All you have to teach your pupils,' she said to them, 'is Christianity and reason; but to do that you must use every means in your power, excepting harshness, which never yet brought anyone to God. . . . Try to be good mothers to good children, and dare to order them to respect you. . . . Remember that, nuns as you are, the girls have the first claim on you; and let untiring devotion to them take the place of ordinary convent austerities.'

And not only did old qualities come to light, but kept their freshness untarnished by Versailles. There every year added to her stiffness and reserve—she herself uses the expression, *sèche comme moi*, as a kind of proverb. At St. Cyr she was at everyone's service, and never happier than when 'teaching Mlle. de la Tour to read, or examining a Postulant on her vocation.' The school represented a far sounder political idea than usually emanated from her brain. It was established for the daughters of impecunious nobles, but its benefits were also intended for their future children and dependents; returned to her home, each pupil was to become a centre of provincial enlightenment, and do her best towards giving France the two things France most needed—'broth and education.' The same spirit of ardent, yet sensible and candid, patriotism inspired all the lessons of St. Cyr. Madame de Maintenon brought the national triumphs vividly before her girls by sketches of the great men she had known, such as Condé and Turenne; but she never allowed them to forget the national disgraces—everyone was a Frenchwoman, and must learn to suffer with the rest. During the disastrous War of the Spanish Succession each of Marlborough's victories meant a Day of Humiliation to the school; and even its dinner-table bore eloquent witness to the universal misery and famine that followed in the train of the war.

Lastly, St. Cyr shows Madame de Maintenon's religion in its best and brightest form. At Court—what with the ennui of her myriad petty duties, and her anxiety about Louis' soul—she sank into something little better than a narrow, timorous devotee, morbidly keen to shift whatever burdened her conscience on to the shoulders of her priests. At St. Cyr the more objectionable forms of clericalism were sternly repressed. There were no agnuses or reliquaries or other 'trumpery convent amusements'; the girls were taught that reason was the best auxiliary to piety. Nothing angered Madame de Maintenon more than the fatuities

of ordinary convent schools—unless it was their prurient shamefacedness. ‘The pupils,’ she wrote, ‘learn by heart the First Commandment, and adore the Virgin; they say “Thou shalt not steal,” and see no harm in cheating the King out of his taxes. One little girl was scandalised because her father spoke of his breeches before her. Another, when I asked her to name the Sacraments, would not mention marriage, and said, with a simper, that it was not the custom to do so at the convent where she was before. This is the sort of thing that makes conventual education ridiculous. When these young ladies get husbands themselves, they will find that marriage is no joke.’

To this moral training of her girls her later energies were all directed. She drove over daily from Versailles; at Louis XIV.’s death (A.D. 1715), she retired altogether to St. Cyr; there she died (April 15, 1719) and was buried in the chapel. Indeed, the one reproach against her is that she made herself too indispensable. During her lifetime she had been the one organic force in the place; once she was gone, petrification quickly set in. Exactly half a century after her death, Horace Walpole visited the school, to find the imprint of her dead hand everywhere—portraits of her in all the rooms, her proverbs and maxims the chief intellectual food of the girls. ‘She was not only their foundress, but their saint,’ he says, ‘and their adoration of her memory has quite eclipsed the Virgin Mary.’ None of her wishes was worse fulfilled than the prayer that St. Cyr might be able to do without her.

Still, in its own modest way, St. Cyr did France long and valuable service. Before it was swept away by the Revolution, many hundreds of young ladies had learnt there how to be good Christians and good Frenchwomen. And its foundress takes an honourable place in history, as a woman who, in all the relations of life, did her duty gallantly and uncomplainingly according to her lights, narrow and ungracious as those lights might sometimes be. Both as educationalist and wife of Louis XIV., she compels our decent admiration; while as a victim to the wear and tear of Courts—to what her own letters call the unendurable ennui of unimaginable greatness—she has claims upon our sympathy equal to any modern Martyred Empress.

ST. CYRES.

MY FRIEND YOSHOMAI.¹

A TALE OF MIND AND LONGITUDE.

WITHIN the strait walls of Herr Gravin's riding school at Bonn on the Rhine I came across Yoshomai—came across him in more ways than one; for he having fallen off his horse when Fräulein Gravin, cracking her whip, uttered the dread word 'Galopiren,' and my careful steed checking her stride to avoid him, I dismounted parabolically and he broke my fall. He received my sulky apology silently, but with the sweetest smile, and was in his saddle, and out of it again as before, while I was nervously hopping to get into mine.

I was not a great horseman, but, while I smote the tan only at intervals, Yoshomai hammered it incessantly; over and over again he must have hurt himself, but always he sprang up as smartly as he slammed down, and was running after his mount, crying, 'Geht es besser, Fräulein?' And although she invariably answered, 'Nein, mein Herr,' he still smiled, if sometimes a little sadly. For a time I regarded this as the care-moulded simper of the ballet girl, but in the end I found it the genuine product of a quite limitless good nature.

We were both of an age, and not an old one—somewhere under twenty; but as I tumbled less frequently from my horse I felt it within my rights to patronise Yoshomai, and now and then I would give him little hints to which he listened with rapt attention, although I do not remember that he ever adopted them. Experience has taught me that he was right, but at the time I took this somewhat amiss, and one day I ridiculed him to red-haired, lean Miss Gravin, who startled me by answering that he rode better than I.

Reflecting that it was useless to argue with a woman, particularly if your knowledge of her language is limited to the idiomatic but trite observations at the back of Otto's Grammar, and a confused recollection of the weak and consequently facile verbs, I confined my reply to the useful monosyllable 'So!' whereupon she answered as laconically, 'Doch!'

At last the time came when I was allowed to ride forth on the

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most sagacious and trustworthy animal in Mr. Gravin's establishment, an old puce-coloured mare with legs as long as church steeples, but less elastic. My vainglory prompted me to suggest that Yoshomai should come too: I never dreamt that he would take up the challenge, but he did.

'I would not have you run any risk,' I pointed out as an afterthought.

'It has been run,' he answered, and for the moment I did not take his meaning, but when he pushed his parti-coloured gelding into the street after me I perceived that he had been there before. In fact, Yoshomai was a different man in the open air from what he had been in the *manège*; and if he still looked so ridiculous that the street boys cackled at him, I could not help thinking that even I would have lost some dignity astride of a circus horse.

My discreet courser was docile as a Lowther Arcade cow, but her paces as we broke into a trot on the paved Coblenzter Strasse brought back a vivid recollection of some less pleasant incidents of my schooldays. Yet so long as friend Yoshomai went bobbety-bob on his tricolour, I could not as a Briton relinquish the task of beating the same measure on my puce. Ye gods, who for his pleasure would be whipped with a blunt razor fixed in a frying pan? It was a level road to Godesberg, without a hill to break the stride, and Yoshomai bobbed on and on every inch of the four miles.

I once bubbled out the deceitful plea, 'M—m—mein puff-puff Pferd scheint müde,' but Yoshomai seemed deaf and I needs must jiggety-jig in his wake until at last he drew rein at the Hotel Adler. Even then he did not dismount, but waiting till I came alongside said apologetically that he was conscious of fatigue and would be glad if I could see my way to allow a short halt. I answered as I clambered pitifully to earth, 'O certainly, since you wish it,' and I reflected on the idleness of Browning's poem, 'How We Brought the Good News,' reckoning the distance from Ghent to Aix at not less than twenty times the journey we had made; but then the chaps had galloped, which is pleasanter than trotting, provided you don't slip off.

Yoshomai and I were relieved of our steeds by a stable boy old enough to have performed the same service for Frederick the Great, and we sate ourselves at a garden table with a bottle of Zeitlinger and two of Victoria water between us. Although we had seen each other every other day for some weeks past, it was, I think, the first time we had indulged in any social intercourse.

He was frankly shy, and I was also, for I doubted he might have caught a glimpse of my uncavalier-like performance on the road. After a little while it dawned upon me that so far was he from being conscious of my shortcomings that he awaited in dread my criticisms of his own. I could not in the circumstances be very severe, and I drew his gratitude by my praise and encouragement, while adding a rider that by trotting for long at a time one is prone to acquire ungraceful motions.

'It is true,' he answered eagerly. 'You are right, you are always right —': his opinion on this subject practically coincided with my own, but I had the grace to say, 'Not always; sometimes, perhaps often, but not always.'

'But,' he burst out, 'is it not good to ride in the fresh air! I do not love riding in Herr Gravin's *manège*. You remember what Goethe says about riding indoors and out,' and here he rattled off a long quotation, of which, although I nodded my head intelligently at every pause, I scarcely understood a word. Later I chanced on the passage in 'Wahrheit und Dichtung,' and luckily found myself in agreement with it; at the moment I thought it good to ask him whether he spoke English as fluently as his German.

'I can speak it a very little,' he modestly replied. 'I have no practice with it.'

'If you would like to try it with me,' I cunningly suggested, 'I should be very pleased to help you with it.'

'O, I thank you, sir,' returned Yoshomai, eagerly. 'If you will please.'

After this the conversation, flowing easily, interested me more.

'If you hate Gravin's place so, why do you go there?' I asked.

'Because,' said he, 'I want to be able to ride anywhere, even within horrible walls. Besides, Mr. and Miss Gravin, they learn me technicalities.'

'Technicalities,' I corrected. 'They teach you technicalities.'

'Ah, thank you,' cried Yoshomai, as though I had given him some gorgeous present. 'Technicalities, technicalities. Mr. and Miss Gravin, they teach me technicalities. Goes it better?'

'Much better,' I nodded, and Yoshomai thanked me again.

I took stock of his appearance as I had never done before: he was far from tall, and what length he had was in the body, the shortness of his stumpy legs accounting for his clumsiness on horseback, which all his pluck and pertinacity could not diminish.

His countenance might loosely be described as that of a low comedian, were it not that vulgarity was supplanted by amiability, and in contrast with the broad mouth and splayed nostrils beamed Sphinx-like eyes, full of the material sensuality of the Orient. The whole personality was absurdly fascinating, what little in it was repellent serving only to heighten what was alluring by making it illusive. His clothes lent no aid to his appearance: the hat was an absurd German coalscuttle, on the rim of which a regiment might have formed square; his coat, though cut *à l'anglaise*, made no pretence to fit, and his legs resembled twin sponge bags. I wondered if he were made of iron that he could straddle a horse in such a kit. His stitched bow tie was a monstrosity, but the collar and the shirt under it caught my eye and puzzled me; they were of an extremely fine linen and might have come from the best Belfast loom, but the shape of the collar as well as the shirt front and cuffs forbade the assumption. My curiosity was pricked. 'Do you happen to know any shop here in Bonn where I could get some decent linen underclothing?' I asked.

'Jaeger has a place near the town hall,' he answered. 'I have not bought anything here.' Then, seeing that I awaited further enlightenment, he added, 'What I wear I bought in Holland.'

'So you have lived in Holland also?' I asked.

'Not lived, sir; studied. I was at Leyden before I came here.'

Chiefly to kill the time we had to spend on horseback, but also partly from interest in Yoshomai, I led him to talk on and on about himself. It transpired that he had been reading law at Leyden; yet when I bantered him as a coming legal light he shook his head. 'Oh, no,' he said; 'oh, no.' I asked him why he exchanged Leyden for Bonn.

'I do not belong to the university here,' he said. 'I study with Colonel Menzel.'

Now Menzel was one of Von Bredow's squadron-leaders at Rezonville, who eked out his pension by taking army pupils: and a queer lot they were—Germans, English, Spanish, Italians, with a sprinkling of Asiatics.

My interest in Yoshomai deepened, for his studies were kindred to my own; and I expressed my lack of comprehension why a candidate for the military profession should commence his studies by attending law lectures in a Dutch university.

Yoshomai smiled. 'It was the idea of my father,' said he. 'My father is very liberal. He delights in modern things, but his education is of the past. He has read very little, and travelled less. In spite of himself, his ideas are old-fashioned. He still thinks the modern officer has no more to learn than the ancient Samurai, the leader of swordsmen. So when he sent me to Europe he bade me, besides my military studies, acquire some learned profession; as if my own profession were not to be a learned one. Why, if I live to be a hundred, I shall never know half enough about it.'

The severity of this view startled me. I could not claim to be a hard worker, but I considered myself in a fair way to some acquaintance with the contents of Clery's 'Minor Tactics' within a few years' time. And I was of opinion that beyond the covers of that work military erudition could not go. How Yoshomai purposed to spend his time I could not imagine.

'Well,' said I, trying to conceal my puzzlement; 'and was it also your father who selected Leyden for the venue of your studies?'

'It was, sir,' Yoshomai answered. 'You see, Holland was, in his youth, the European country best known in Japan. Indeed, it was almost the only country, except China and Corea, known at all until the American ships appeared off Yedo, 1853.'

'Did not the Portuguese have a settlement somewhere?'

I hazarded. It was more than half a guess.

'Yes,' Yoshomai replied. 'And we had St. Francis Xavier and the Jesuits; but in the end we caught them intriguing in our politics, and we cleared out all Europeans except the Dutch, who kept strictly to business at Nagasaki and never interfered on any pretence—not even during the Christian persecutions, except to lend us guns to batter the Christian fortress.'

My religious feelings were shocked. 'That was a bit thick,' I said.

'I think they were right,' he said thoughtfully. 'You sell arms to the Turks and Chinese to use against Christians. They lent theirs to save their factory. Besides, these same Christians were Spanish and Portuguese converts who injured the Dutch whenever they had a chance.' He had delivered this argument very seriously, but the smile reappeared as he added, 'Besides, the guns were no use.'

'I see you admire the Dutch,' I observed.

Again Yoshomai shook his head. 'No, I cannot admire. I

like and respect, but I do not admire. I admire some episodes in their history—some men who stand out from the crowd; but my admiration is with the past. Now the Dutch live in an intellectual fool's paradise.'

Yoshomai's talk had gone over my head, and I did not pursue the subject.

'Do you know England too?' I asked.

'I have not been there, but I have read enough to know that she too lives in a fool's paradise, and not an intellectual fool's paradise.'

This sounded to me sheer cheek, and a little warmly I begged to be informed what country he considered did not live in a fool's paradise, ironically suggesting China.

His smile broadened. 'China,' he declared, 'lives in what you call a dam-fool's paradise. Three countries that do not live in a fool's paradise are Prussia, Russia, and Japan. And Prussia shall acquire Holland's paradise, Russia yours, and we China's.'

I could scarcely control my temper at this prophetic redistribution of the earth. 'I do not think these interesting events will take place in our time,' I suggested scathingly.

'Perhaps not,' Yoshomai admitted, without offence at my tone. 'It depends whether "our time" ends in half an hour or half a century.'

'Do you mean to tell me,' I cried, 'that half a century hence England will be a Russian province?'

'I am not brain-cracked,' Yoshomai said. 'I tell you that half a century hence the Russian flag will fly in certain places where the Union Jack flies now; that Friesland, Gröningen and Overijssel will belong to the German Empire; and that my country will possess Korea, Formosa, Shingking and Shantung.'

He was going on to tell me what would have come to pass in a century and a half, when I, whose geographical knowledge was insufficient to follow his argument, much less confute it, suggested that it was time to be getting home.

He immediately dropped the contention, and made ready to be gone. He insisted on paying for what we had drunk, and he would likewise have insisted on trotting all the way home, only that by good fortune his mount was discovered to have developed sore-back. Gravin told me the next day that he had found mine in the same condition; but I was careful not to look for any sign

of it while in Yoshomai's company, although he was very anxious for me to do so, being, naturally, a shade put out by this evidence of his clumsy equestrianism.

After leaving our horses at the riding school we adjourned to the Café Tewele, and over a bottle of sparkling Moselle made many plans in earnest of future good-fellowship.

A few days later he called on me at my rooms in Friedrich Wilhelm Strasse, and we went together to the gardens of the Hotel Kley to hear the band. Here occurred the incident which set a seal upon our friendship.

I had observed that, notwithstanding his semi-barbarous appearance, his outrageous costumes, and his ungainly seat, Yoshomai had won some favour from Miss Gravin; and now that we were together I could see that she was not the only woman to fall under the fascination of the Jap's eyes.

At a table near us sat three *Corpsstudenten*—'Green Caps,' if my memory serves me; and with them was a fluffy, fair-haired, plump, and pretty maiden, whose mother kept a fancy stationer's shop under the shadow of the steeple of the Münster Kirche.

Now I had some trifling knowledge of this young lady, but my acquaintance with student etiquette forbade my displaying it. Yoshomai was less discreet. Seeing a pretty girl, he fixed his eyes on her, and caught hers, which yielded at once. From that time she lost touch with her own party, and whenever Yoshomai troubled to turn to them her eyes were always ready to receive him.

Yoshomai's misconduct did not amount to more than a display of doubtful taste, but it was easy for me to see whither it would lead him. Two of the Green Caps wore the ugly badges of the *Schwingsäbel*; the third I judged to be a Freshman, yet un-blooded. It would be the aim of his seniors to fix a quarrel on him if they could.

'If you don't want a duel in the morning,' I said to Yoshomai, 'you'd better take your eyes off that flaxy, waxy doll over there.'

This warning did not produce the effect for which I looked.

'A duel,' Yoshomai echoed. 'A duel. Can I get a duel by just looking at her like this? Will you be my second?'

'Can you handle the student's sword?' I asked.

Yoshomai's face fell. 'Oh, is it that sort of duel? Blades without points; that is nonsense.'

'It's not nonsense,' I observed; 'if you have your nose snipped off, as I saw happen three days ago, to Dulheuer, the jurist.'

'Ugh!' Yoshomai snorted, passing his fingers over his face. 'I heard nothing of his death.'

'Oh, he wasn't killed,' I answered. 'Only disfigured.'

Yoshomai stared at me, really horror-stricken. 'Do you mean that he went on living without a nose?'

'Certainly,' I answered. 'It's a bit inconvenient, and to my mind, it's not pretty; but I've no doubt you'll see him walking about here as proud as Punch as soon as the doctor lets him out.'

'Oh,' Yoshomai cried, almost piteously. 'They are mad, these students,' and mechanically repeated the statement in German: 'Sie sind verrückt. Die Studenten sind verrückt.'

This incautiously loud speech precipitated the catastrophe.

The words were barely said when I saw our neighbours busy with their card cases, and while one of the elder students settled up with the waiter, and went off with the girl, the other and the Freshman came over to our table and asked our names, or rather at first they asked only for Yoshomai's, and then requested, in a somewhat supercilious tone, to be informed whether I considered myself to be his friend. To which I answered, certainly that I did.

The younger of the students, the actual challenger, was well-mannered enough, and I recognised that the truculence of his air was only to mask his nervousness; but the other was a beer-bloated swaggerer of the most offensive type.

I very much disliked the position in which I found myself, for, my principal being undoubtedly in the wrong, I had not the freedom of action which would have been mine if the quarrel had been entirely unprovoked. Natheless, I kept my wits about me, and, insisting on the choice of weapons, declined absolutely the *Schwingsäbel*. For this attitude the Green Caps were unprepared, and as the incident had drawn too much attention for them to let the matter drop without exposing themselves to ridicule, the argument tended towards the personal.

I was accordingly relieved when my friend the Freiherr Von Mondenstein, the adjutant of the local battalion of the Regiment von Göben, happening to pass, came to offer me his services.

His arrival put quite another complexion on the matter, and the overbearing Green Cap stilling his voice I explained rapidly to Von Mondenstein who Yoshomai was and what had happened.

Von Mondenstein smiled and gave judgment in a moment. 'The Japanese gentleman is certainly seriously at fault,' said he. 'He must give the student gentleman satisfaction with pistols. I hope that will satisfy you,' he said to the Freshman, who seemed in doubt; and as he did not answer the Freiherr added easily, 'If that does not satisfy you, I shall be very happy to serve you with the *Schwingsäbel*.'

The Freshman hastily declared that he was satisfied; and I thought he was wise, for it was Von Mondenstein I had seen carve Dulheuer the jurist.

I thoroughly enjoyed the turn things had taken, for the students, who had counted on bleeding Yoshomai to make sport, now found themselves saddled with a serious affair. To do the blusterer justice, he tried to get his principal out of the scrape by reminding Von Mondenstein that the pistol was not a student's weapon, but the Baron was inexorable: 'You have challenged this gentleman, sir,' said he. 'You must take the consequences. For my part I do not think students should fight at all. They should have nurses to keep them from quarrelling.'

'He insulted the lady who was with us,' said the student, angrily.

The Baron grinned a deliciously provoking grin: 'What sort of lady? A student's lady?'

The Freshman, evidently in his calf love, fired up at this: 'My card, sir,' said he, and thrust it into the Baron's hand.

'I thank you,' said Von Mondenstein, imperturbably. 'If you are alive the day after to-morrow——' He paused.

'Well, sir?' snapped the student. 'If I am?'

'You will not be the next day,' the Freiherr lisped, and, turning his back on both, chatted with Yoshomai while I arranged with the elder student the time and conditions of the duel.

That done the three of us left the gardens, Von Mondenstein accompanying us as far as the Infantry Barracks. When we had parted company with him I talked to Yoshomai as seriously as I could.

'Are you anything of a pistol shot?' I asked.

'I can kill him at the distance,' he answered.

'And do you intend to do so?' I inquired.

Yoshomai did not miss the suggestion in my tone: 'Why not? He will try to kill me.'

I said at once that I did not believe for a moment he would.

And that even if he wished to he could not for want both of skill and of nerve.

Yoshomai walked a whole street in silence.

'Why, why, why did he challenge me?' he asked.

'He challenged you,' said I, endeavouring to find words for the complicated train of ideas, 'firstly because he was egged on to it by the other two.'

'Why did not either of them challenge me?'

'Because they wanted him to fight. And they thought we would be foolish enough to let them name their weapon.'

'Yes,' said Yoshomai, trembling with indignation. 'They thought to cut off my nose. He thought to cut off my nose.' He burst out laughing. 'Now I will cut off his life.'

'I should sleep on it,' said I, 'before you make up your mind.'

'But if I do not kill him,' Yoshomai argued, 'the Freiherr Von Mondenstein will.'

'I'm not so sure,' I said. 'Besides, Von Mondenstein, for all his good points, is a bit of a swashbuckler, and in my country anyway we do not think that good form.'

Yoshomai pricked his ears, much interested. 'Is that so? Shakespeare or Edmund Burke, or Nelson or Mr. Gladstone, you think, would not approve of my killing him?'

I answered unhesitatingly that every one of the four would cordially condemn such an act.

'Ah, then, I must reconsider the matter,' agreed Yoshomai, as we parted for the night.

The next morning at five o'clock I called for him in a closed carriage, and having picked up at the Caserne Von Mondenstein, who had expressed a desire to be present, we drove to a certain spot on the Rhine bank where a boat waited to ferry us across. Near Bühl was the meeting place.

It was a fragrant, early summer morning, and although I did not anticipate any very bloody ending to the foolish business, untoward things will happen, and I was glad it was not I who had to stand up and be shot at. The pleasures of sun and air and water as we ripped across the current were mottled by the lugubrious humour which Von Mondenstein, after the manner of fire-eaters, thought appropriate to the occasion.

Our opponents were waiting us: they had brought not only a doctor but a clergyman, the sight of whom drove from my mind

all thought of dangerous intent on the part of the young student.

The preliminaries took a little time, the duel itself was over in a second. When Von Mondenstein dropped his handkerchief the Freshman shut his eyes and fired in the air; Yoshomai did not fire at all, but, having stood steadily to receive the bullet if it fell his way, handed his loaded pistol to me and stepped over to his opponent.

'If I have given you offence, I did it without malice,' he said. 'And I am very sorry.'

'Thank you, sir,' the student replied very readily, and offered his hand.

Von Mondenstein shook his head gravely: 'This will never do; very irregular,' he said.

'O come,' I said, in a low voice. 'My man would have killed him, and he's only a boy.'

'Boys should be boys, then,' snorted Von Mondenstein. 'But of course it's not my business. Only please, my dear kind sir, don't say I was present when this farce took place.' He went over to the Freshman. 'I have chosen single sticks for our meeting,' he said brutally.

The Freshman flushed to the temples. 'Do you object to my using a whip?' he retorted.

Von Mondenstein was a gentleman under his swaggering exterior, and did not resent the justifiable snub; indeed, he admired the other's spirit.

'Sir, if you will allow it,' he said, 'we will postpone our meeting until you are old enough to handle dangerous weapons.'

'I am quite old enough to receive your fire,' said the student proudly.

'Thank you,' laughed Von Mondenstein. 'I am not a chicken butcher.'

'You take advantage of your cloth, sir, to insult me,' cried the student, meaning, of course, that he dared not sully the Emperor's uniform with a blow. It was Von Mondenstein's turn to redder now, and his truculent manner fell from him. 'That it should be possible for you to say that,' he said courteously, 'proves me in the wrong. Your life is in my hands. I give it to you with an apology.'

All things considered, this was handsome of him, and the Freshman appreciated it. Five minutes later the whole party,

including the doctor and clergyman, left the field and recrossed the Rhine together as friendly as if nothing in the world could lead us to disagree on any subject whatsoever. The Freshman entertained us at breakfast, and the affair ended in all cosiness.

I should not have described the incident between Von Mondenstein and the student so minutely only that Yoshomai was much impressed by it.

The breakfast terminated hilariously past noon, and the necessity of going to bed to digest it prevented all private discussion between Yoshomai and myself that day, but the following evening he came to see me and we talked things over.

'I do not understand you Europeans in the very least,' he sighed, wringing his hands. 'It is incomprehensible. I have thought, and thought, and thought, but I understand nothing.'

'I find these German students a bit ridiculous, too,' said I. 'But of course we all see things from different points of view. Even, you observe, the officer and the student affect different standpoints?'

'Yes, yes,' Yoshomai assented, 'but with us it is not so. In my country, if a man put a quarrel on me, I should kill him or he would kill me.'

'But not such a foolish quarrel!' I protested.

'If fools quarrel foolishly, fools are better dead,' Yoshomai declared sententiously.

'Yes, fools are better dead,' I agreed. 'All the same, one doesn't care to have the deading of them.'

'Why not?' quoth Yoshomai's inquiring spirit, 'as a soldier you will have to kill fools and wise men too.'

'One never knows,' I said; 'it may be that I shall never kill as much as a West African nigger. And anyway there's no personal animosity in it.'

'Personal animosity!' Yoshomai echoed. 'I never felt personal animosity in my life. I liked the young student. I could love him as a brother, but I would have killed him had it not been for you.'

'Let brotherly love continue,' said I, and tried to explain things to him and to myself. 'The fact is,' said I, 'the difference between East and West is that you hold life cheap. We don't; being a pious Christian people, with a firm belief in Heaven, we try to keep out of it as long as we can. You are brought up to regard death as an unavoidable incident of

secondary importance. We—I speak now for my own people—think it rather morbid to make a will.’

‘I think,’ said Yoshomai, ‘in this we are wiser than you.’

‘I daresay you are,’ I answered; ‘have a drink,’ and I led him to other subjects.

From that time Yoshomai and I spent a part of almost every day in each other’s society, and my affection for him grew, as did also, I like to think, his for me. He was, however, an exceedingly hard worker, and would shut himself up now and then for a week on end. This was generally after I had tempted him to waste a day with me in Cologne or up the river. ‘I cannot understand how you will pass your exams.,’ he would exclaim; ‘you are so very idle, my dear friend, you are so very idle.’

‘O come,’ I returned, ‘I work as much as is necessary; I have my studies well in hand.’ Whereupon Yoshomai would say that he would like to see me tackle a Japanese or even a German examination paper. Once he was reduced to the depths of despair because Menzel had discovered an error in his calculation of the dimensions of a field work.

‘After all,’ I pointed out, ‘it’s the merest slip of the pen in setting down the terms of the proposition.’

‘That’s not the point,’ Yoshomai groaned: ‘the point is that men who make mistakes are not to be trusted with the honour of their country.’

‘We don’t look at it that way,’ I laughed. ‘We regard a man who never does anything foolish as a pretentious prig. In fact, we employ fools for preference, in the hope of their having good fortune.’

‘O, you are mad,’ Yoshomai declared again, ‘you are mad, and the gods will destroy you.’

‘If the gods are set on our destruction,’ I contended, ‘what availeth wisdom?’

‘To bother the gods,’ was Yoshomai’s prompt reply, and he went off to take such precautions as might preclude further error in the calculation of the dimensions of field works.

A few weeks later came the time when fate parted us—he returning East to enter the military college at Tokyo, I a little later coming back to England.

This was eleven years ago, when it was not quite so easy to get into the army as it is now. I suppose I really had idled my

time in Bonn, for to my surprise I was ploughed for Sandhurst, and, trying the alternative door of the Militia, I only succeeded at the third shot in qualifying for a cavalry commission. This I was too poor to accept, and so I found myself at twenty-two an aimless waif, with the unearned reputation of a good-for-nothing.

They would not enlist me because of some defect in my eyesight, the nature of which I have never been able to understand, and which I have been credibly informed exists only in the imagination of certain distinguished oculists of the Army Medical Service, so, having no influence to procure me a colony to govern, there was nothing left for me but to go on the stage. Eighteen months of this brought me to India, where I disagreed with my manageress and fell in with a newspaper editor whose son had been in my militia. He sent me to write up a hill war, and for once in my life someone was satisfied with me besides myself. Another followed, and my success was not impaired, so when the Chino-Japanese hostilities broke out in 1894 I was emboldened to ask my chief whether he would risk a few hundred to plant me in the thick of it. He rose like a bird: I packed and sailed first steamer, feeling I had won my right to walk the earth at last.

My chief was in favour of my seeing things from the Chinese side, as he had some acquaintance with one of the military Mandarins, and this influence, eked out by bribery, corruption, and sheer bluff, carried me through Shingking to Korea—that is to say, to the boundary of that unquiet empire of the Morning Calm, for at the other side of the Yalu river we found the Japanese, and after some desultory warfare the Chinese Commander abandoned the contest and fell back.

I have always respected my personal safety as far as was compatible with plying my trade, so I seized this opportunity to shift my standpoint to the conquering side, surrendering to a patrol of Japanese lancers and requesting to be favoured with an interview by their Commander-in-Chief. This was Marshal Yamagata, who received me kindly, although he could not resist a sarcasm at the idea of anyone trying to describe what the Chinese Generals were doing when they themselves had no conception of it. And not only was Marshal Yamagata courteous, but he was so unselfish as to advise me that his future operations would be less worth following than those of Count Oyama, who

by that time had landed in the Liao-Tung peninsula, on his way to attack the northern defences of the Gulf of Pechili. Accordingly, I availed myself of his safe conduct to Ping Ying, where the skipper of a Cardiff tramp, chartered as transport by the Mikado's Government, stowed me away as a coolie and gave me a passage to Hua-yuan-kon. I reached the front on the evening of November 6, the day Kinchow had fallen; and the following morning was a spectator of the bloodless capture of Talienwan. The succeeding days there was little doing, and I used them to sleep away the fatigues of my journey, for I had not had a decent night's rest since leaving the Indian mail boat.

Recognising that I knew something about soldiering, and had not been sent to report the campaign as one reports a police case or a charity dinner, the Japanese officers treated me with every consideration, and vied with each other in supplying me with information, though now and then it was saddled with a time proviso. In return it was my custom to send no line to my paper which I had not shown to some officer of field rank; and in consequence my lot was as pleasant as could be.

Fresh troops arrived to share in the attack on Port Arthur, and they had hardly taken their ground when a troop of their horse was very roughly handled by the Chinese, and only escaped disaster by the brilliant handling of half a company of infantry by a young lieutenant, who, seeing their scrape, doubled out on his own responsibility to their rescue.

I scribbled an account of the affair as well as I could piece it together from the camp rumours, and was sending it off when it occurred to me that I had not mentioned the name of the officer, and I asked what it was. They told me, 'Yoshomai.'

Curiously enough, the sound did not at once strike me as familiar, and it was not until I had asked the spelling and had written it down that I remembered my Bonn acquaintance. My first thought was the humiliating one that I who had been his patron five years before should now find myself the mere chronicler of his exploits; and this, coupled with the reflection that he had not answered the letter in which I told him of the failure of my last exam., prompted me to avoid him. It was decreed, however, that we should meet, for, business bringing me into the neighbourhood of the headquarters tent, I encountered him coming from it. The Count had sent for him to be congratulated on his adventure.

When he saw me he started violently, and the colour went out of his face.

'What's the matter?' I asked. 'Don't you know me?'

For an answer he dropped his forefinger tentatively on my shoulder. 'You are flesh and blood?' he queried.

'Of course,' I answered, a little tickled by the absurdity of his doubt.

'I thought you were dead.'

'Who told you that?'

'Didn't you fail in your exams., after all?'

'Yes, but not in my heart,' I smirked.

'Oh, you Europeans!' cried Yoshomai, just like the old Yoshomai of Bonn. 'I cannot, cannot understand you.'

'Did you think I was going to blow out my brains because of a durned exam.?' I blurted.

'When I read your letter,' Yoshomai said, 'I weeped because I could not make you the friendly office, being so far, far away.'

'And that was why you didn't write?' said I.

'You would not have me write to a defunct corpse?' said Yoshomai. 'And I thought you would have been a defunct corpse.'

I suggested that he might have given me the benefit of the doubt, and then turned the talk into the channel of things of the moment. First and foremost, I complimented him on his new-won fame, and he swallowed the phrases with childish delight. 'You found it good?' he murmured. 'You found it good? I too find it not what you used to call half bad.'

'It was tremendous,' I reiterated. 'I have sent an account of it to my paper.'

'To your paper. Have you a paper, a journal, a real journal? Shall my name appear in it—please mention Olonghi too.' Yoshomai frothed with excitement.

'Who's Olonghi?' I asked.

'My orderly: he was killed. I was attacked by four Chinese; he came to help and was killed.'

'I never heard of him before,' I admitted. 'But if you tell me all about it I'll try to work him in later.'

So our talk went on: Yoshomai was full of himself and the glory of his country. 'What do you think of Japan now? Goes it best, eh? Remember you what I prophesied that day at Godesberg? We shall have Laotong too: you will see our flag

over Pekin. I may not see it, but it will be there. Poor Olonghi he said he would see it. Man knows what will be seen, but not what he will see. Those days at Bonn, and the duel, and the foolish student with his clergyman. And the pretty girl; she was a doll, as you said. I found that out afterwards. What you said was always right. And yet you did not pass your exam. And yet you are here alive. O my dear, dear friend, how strange are Europeans. Poor Olonghi. Would you like to see his noble head ?

'Not particularly, thanks,' said I. 'Who cut it off ?'

'I did,' said Yoshomai. 'He was a Samurai, you know, and when he was wounded he claimed the friendly office from me lest he should fall into the hands of the enemy. I have his head in my uniform case wrapped in a flag he captured. I will send it to-morrow to his home in Kiu-shiu. You really would not wish to see it ? It is no trouble.'

I felt that I dared not refuse a second time this honour to Yoshomai's *protégé*, so I went and inspected the poor grisly relic of a brave man, with the result that I was off my feed and out of temper for the rest of the day.

Yoshomai could not understand my moroseness: he told me Olonghi's brother would avenge him in the next fight, and chattered on and on until my head was splitting, and he was recalled to duty by the announcement that on the morrow Port Arthur should be assailed.

That morrow left a deep impression on my mind. To begin with, to see troops moving to the attack at two o'clock in the morning by the light of Chinese lanterns was in itself remarkable. Moreover, I had never seen operations on such a large scale before; and, again, the peculiar conditions which allowed a huge fortress to be stormed by a combined naval and military assault are of a nature to strike the memory. I was standing near the heavy battery in the Shui-shih-ying valley when, as dawn whitened the sea at half-past six, they opened fire. This was not the best standpoint to take up, for the earlier interest of the fight lay with Nogi's and Nishi's brigades, sent far away on the right against the forts on the great hill, supposed to be the key of the enemy's position. My reason for choosing it was that Hosegawa's brigade, to which Yoshomai's regiment, the 24th, belonged, would pass it as they swept on to storm the Cock's Comb and Dragon works on the eastern face of the town. It was past nine when this attack was

developed, and Nishi and Nogi had already effected their lodgement on the western heights, from which their guns took the other defences in reverse; yet this frontal attack of Hosegawa's was no vain parade. I followed now the Brigadier's mountain battery and could see the track of the three battalions of the 24th, covered with casualties, as closing up their skirmishing lines they swarmed up the steep ascent to the forts. Then a faint echo of voices reached us as the gunfire stilled.

Spurring my thirteen-hand nag to his best speed, I rode now straight to the road leading between the silenced defences into the town. At a bridge there was a savage little fight between the 2nd Japanese and some Chinese, who, dropping their arms at last, were butchered to a man. I could not help a cry of remonstrance at this barbarity, whereupon the Japanese commander, turning on me in indignant surprise, said, 'Why, sir, it is what you call tit-for-tat.'

This excuse was not without some colour, but the scene which followed in the town was unspeakably horrid; not soldiers, nor even only male civilians, fell victims to the Japanese: men, women, children, dogs, pigs—every living thing to be found in the streets of Port Arthur was blasted by their fury. I had already seen grim and ghastly episodes in our own Indian warfare, but there useless slaughter was the exception, here it was the rule. And the extraordinary thing was that the Japanese officers, those soft-spoken, intellectual gentlemen with whom it was a pleasure to mix and converse, seemed absolutely unconscious that there was anything outrageous in the conduct of their men. They certainly did not abet, but they made little or no effort to restrain.

It was not my business to get my throat cut in the effort to teach the Japanese humanity; but once, in spite of myself, I had to interfere. A young woman with a babe at breast rushed past me, pursued by a howling infantryman of Yoshomai's regiment waving a Samurai's sword. The wretched creature gained the shelter of a house and shut the door in the Jap's face, but it was a feeble protection, and he would have had it down in a breath only that I caught him from behind and flung him away.

Of course he turned his rage on me, and the next instant I was running at top speed to the place I had left my horse, with the swordsman at my heels and the swish of his blade in my ears.

With such a spur it is easy to run, but difficult to think

where: I took the wrong turn, and instead of reaching the open ground, where I had left my servant and horse, I plunged into a labyrinth of lanes.

The chase must have lasted some minutes, when some one stepped between me and my pursuer: there was a burst of voices in contention; but I ran on unheeding until I heard Yoshomai's voice calling me to come back.

Slowly and cautiously I retraced my steps, revolver in hand, ready for a renewed onslaught, but I found my assailant dead in a puddle of blood which oozed from beneath his breastbone, and Yoshomai standing over him with a frightened, pitiful look in his eyes.

'Why did you provoke him?' Yoshomai asked.

'I didn't provoke him,' I answered. 'I only kept him back from murdering a woman and child.'

'It was not your business,' Yoshomai murmured.

This answer seemed to me ridiculous, but I could hardly squabble with the man who had just saved my life, so I told him that, having seen the man belonged to his regiment, I thought I would save him from a crime.

'Yes, he does belong to my regiment,' agreed Yoshomai bitterly. 'It is the brother of Olonghi, and he is dead by my hand.'

'Was it necessary to kill him?' I asked, a little startled.

Yoshomai bowed his head. 'He struck me, and so I had to kill him. And so I must kill myself too.'

'What!' I cried dumbfounded.

'I must kill myself—do *hari-kari*,' reiterated Yoshomai firmly. 'A Japanese officer cannot in honour be stricken by his own man and live.'

'Come, my dear fellow,' I returned. 'That's all primeval nonsense. Put the idea out of your head. Why, no one in the world will ever know that he did strike you.'

Yoshomai did not argue, he merely asked whether I would do him the friendly office, or in other words cut off his head after he had opened his body with his sword.

'I'm hanged if I do,' I answered, almost laughing at the craziness of the thought.

On this an extraordinary change came over Yoshomai's face.

His eyes blazed as he waved his still dripping sword. 'Go,

then, beloved but faithless friend,' he cried imperiously. 'Fool that I was to give my life for yours.'

'Yoshomai, old chap!' I exclaimed entreatingly; but there was a look on his face which quenched my arguments in fear, and I turned on my heel and fled as fast and faster than before.

The next day among the slain at the taking of Port Arthur I read the name of Lieutenant Yoshomai. He and the brother of Olonghi were said to have been murdered by the Chinese, and this supposed crime was balanced in the official reports against the atrocities committed by the troops.

F. NORREYS CONNELL.

THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD: COROLLARY.

[NOTE.—Readers of the CORNHILL will remember an article in the February number by Mr. Stephen Gwynn on 'The Luxury of Doing Good,' in which, taking for his text Hobbes' dictum that 'Benevolence is a love of power and delight in the exercise of it,' he upholds the paradox that men do good not from pure and disinterested kindness, but for the gratification of the pleasurable, and therefore intrinsically selfish, instinct of action and self-expression. The essay has provoked the following verses.—ED. CORNHILL.]

PHILOSOPHER.

SAY, whither with those bags of gold,
 Proprietor of wealth untold?
 Tell one who knows of no such things
 As Booms and Corners, Trusts and Rings,
 What happy Rails, what lucky Mines,
 What high capitalist's designs,
 What province of finance or trade,
 Expects your vivifying aid?
 Oh, tell me, in what shy resort,
 Victoria Street or Capel Court,
 You go to buy th' augmenting share?
 Tell me, my multi-millionaire!

MILLIONAIRE.

Excuse me, Sir: you wrongly guess;
 This gold is for the C.O.S.
 Think you the rich no object know
 Save that they still may richer grow?
 Nay, for myself—when shares are high
 I hear the call of Charity;
 And when I've given the humble poor
 Some fraction of my golden store,
 Full well I deem that fraction spent—
 For I have been benevolent.

PHILOSOPHER.

Benevolent! 'Tis quite absurd
How people use that stupid word!
Read, to correct your boastful mood,
'The Luxury of Doing Good,'
Where Mr. Gwynn and Thomas Hobbes
Prove that the seeming-generous throbs
Which agitate at times your breast
Proceed from mere self-interest.
Learn that the man who helps his friends
Does it to serve his proper ends;
What aid you give, in power or pelf,
Is simply given to please yourself.
It shows a kind of moral twist
To think that you're an altruist;
Let such ideas at once take wing—
Because, of course, there's no such thing!

MILLIONAIRE.

Forgive me, if perhaps I err—
I am not a philosopher—
The gentle art of splitting hairs
Is not for multi-millionaires.
Yet, say,—if this your conduct guide,
Such rules, consistently applied,
Play, if conclusion right I draw,
The dickens with the Moral Law;
For how, on your peculiar plan,
Define the Bad or Virtuous man?

PHILOSOPHER.

You touch the spot; 'tis even so:
That's just the thing I meant to show;
I hardly thought to find so swift
A readiness to take my drift.
Both Good and Bad are really based
On mere discrepancy of taste;

That Virtue which your pulpits praise
 Is simply a misleading phrase,
 For so-called Vice is every bit
 As justly laudable as it ;
 And in a quite especial sense
 This holds of your Benevolence.

MILLIONAIRE.

Dear me! dear me! You're right, no doubt . . .
 But leave the moral question out,
 And think of my relations with
 Impoverished Jones and blighted Smith,
 Who, freed by me from misery's mesh,
 Are started on their legs afresh:
 Surely, it's reasonably plain
 Some gratitude from them I gain?
 They'll bless the man *qui cito dat*—
 There's something, after all, in that!

PHILOSOPHER.

Dismiss at once these notions crude:
 This is no case for gratitude.
 Here's Smith, or Jones (I care not which,
 I mean the man who's far from rich),—
 With his affairs ('tis kindness sheer)
 He suffers you to interfere,
 By loaves of bread and pounds of tea
 To vex his love for liberty,
 With bounty arrogantly doled
 His personality to mould—
 That you, my friend, may feel thereby
 Your finger in an alien pie,
 May find, forsooth! an active sphere
 By feeding him with beef and beer,
 Which gratifies your selfish sense
 Of Pride and Power and Influence:—
 And is it then your curious view
 That he should grateful be to you?

Let no such mists your brain bedim:
'Tis you should render thanks to him!

MILLIONAIRE.

If this be so, I plainly see
Benevolence is not for me;
It is a thing which happy makes
Nor him that gives nor him that takes.
For if 'tis based on motives low,
Nor e'en affords a *quid pro quo*,
Why should I pay a longish price
For unremunerative Vice?
Oh, no! I'll do what's wiser far,
And buy another motor car.
In vain may paupers throng my door—
I've sinned enough, I'll sin no more;
And when starvation makes them thin
Blame Thomas Hobbes and Mr. Gwynn!

A. D. GODLEY.

A FEW CONVERSATIONALISTS.

If it be true that the art of conversation is declining among us, that it has become one of the old-fashioned things for which we have 'no time;' if that intellectual enjoyment, perhaps one of the greatest of which the mind is capable, has lost its place in our esteem and pursuit, it is only natural that those who can remember with an undying memory the talk of such men as Browning, Leighton, Ruskin, Monckton Milnes, Sir Alexander Cockburn, Dr. Jowett, Thackeray, and Richard Doyle, should regard that memory as a precious inheritance, and even regretfully wonder what may not be the result of the loss of conversation upon the future culture of society. Through these men, and perhaps even more through the brilliant women who adorned their society—Lady Taylor, Mrs. Procter, Mrs. Sartoris, Lady Dufferin, Mrs. Norton—we received the tradition of the talk—perhaps more brilliant still—of Macaulay, Brougham, Rogers, Sydney Smith and Lord and Lady Holland, Coleridge and Charles Lamb. With but little effort we seemed to be carried on that flowing stream to the days of Sir Joshua, Sheridan, Burke, Garrick, and Dr. Johnson, until we almost seemed to hear Fanny Burney exclaim, after a party at Sir Joshua's with the Sheridans, &c.: 'I have no time or room to go on, or I could write a folio of the conversation at supper, when everybody was in spirits, and a thousand good things were said.'

It is interesting to remember that the period when in England conversation was at its best—between the middle of the eighteenth and of the nineteenth centuries—was also the time when most of the great libraries of the country were formed, proving the intimate alliance between literature and conversation and forcibly bringing to mind Addison's words: 'Conversation with men of a polite genius is another method of improving our natural taste. It is impossible for a man of the greatest parts to consider anything in its whole extent and in all its variety of lights. Every man, besides those general observations which are to be made upon an author, forms several reflections that are peculiar to his own manner of thinking; so that conversation will naturally furnish us with hints which we did not attend to, and make us

enjoy other men's parts and reflections as well as our own. This is the best reason I can give for the observation which several have made, that men of great genius in the same way of writing seldom rise up singly, but at certain periods of time appear together, and in a body; as they did at Rome in the reign of Augustus, and in Greece about the age of Socrates. I cannot think that Corneille, Racine, Molière, Boileau, La Fontaine, Bruyère, Bossu, or the Daciers, would have written so well as they have done had they not been friends and contemporaries.'

Addison also gives us the number of *five* as best fitted for the enjoyment of good talk in the delightful 'Tatler' (April 1710), comparing conversation to a concert of music. His favourite talker is evidently he whom he compares to a lute: 'Its notes are exquisitely sweet and very low, easily drowned in a multitude of instruments and even lost among a few, unless you give a particular attention to it. A lute is seldom heard in a company of more than five. . . . The Lutanists therefore are men of a fine genius, uncommon reflection, great affability, and esteemed chiefly by persons of good taste, who are the only proper judges of so delightful and soft a melody.'

The sense of leisure, without which conversation is well-nigh impossible, strikes us again and again in the memoirs of the past and in the recollections of our elders. Men still living can remember the long and uninterrupted hours spent in the libraries of country houses, and tell us of the genial hours of talk after dinner—eaten then at five o'clock—when in winter a narrow table, semi-circular in shape,¹ was placed before the hearth, snugly enclosing the fire, and the gentlemen drew their chairs around and placed their glasses on it, and conversed—'and there would be some very good talk,' with no interruption but that of the watchman as he went round the house calling the hours.

When Dr. Johnson said of Burke: 'If a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say: "This is an extraordinary man;"' and again: 'If Burke should go into a stable to see his horse dressed, the hostler would say: "We have had an extraordinary man here,"' the compliment was not to the great statesman or orator, but to Burke the conversationalist. 'That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me,' he cries

¹ Sir Algernon West tells us in his *Memoirs* that these tables were in use at Latimer, Lord Chesham's charming place in Bucks, until 1864.

when ill and unable to exert himself as usual. Another of Burke's contemporaries paid him the compliment of addressing Milton's words to him :

With thee conversing, I forget all time.

So highly did our ancestors rate the pleasure of conversation that the difficulty of enjoying it was considered one of the penalties of royalty. Queen Charlotte complains to her old friend Mrs. Delany of the difficulty with which she can get any conversation, as she not only has to start the subjects, but commonly to support them as well ; and she says there is nothing she so much loves as conversation, and nothing she finds it so hard to get. So Mrs. Delaney repeats this to Miss Burney, and adjures her to speak freely with the Queen, not to draw back from her, nor to stop conversation with only answering yes or no.

It is a noteworthy fact that in considering English conversationalists we find ourselves almost entirely among men. From Dean Swift to Sydney Smith, Macaulay and Rogers, we move in a masculine atmosphere—of snug coffee-houses and ordinaries in the days of Swift and Steele and Addison, of the club of the Johnsonian era, the tavern's best room its *habitat*, with rules which now excite a smile: the twenty-four members of the Essex Street Club, founded by Johnson shortly before his death, to meet three times a week—'he who misses forfeits twopence'—the library at Streatham, Coleridge's table, Rogers's breakfasts, and, later still, those of Monckton Milnes. It is true that Swift pays compliments to Stella on her conversational powers ; that Dr. Johnson spoke highly of Mrs. Montagu's wit ; that, in his day, the Duchess of Portland and Mrs. Delany went by the name of the 'old wits ;' that Mrs. Thrale's conversation was delightful, and that Mrs. Chapone, in spite of her infirmities and uncommon ugliness, charmed all who approached her with her silver speech. At all times there have been women who have made their mark among the conversationalists of their day, but their position was a subordinate one, and it is evident that in that 'concert' the part they played was very generally that of the second violins. So much is this the case that a writer of the present day, in a chapter on Conversation, speaking of Bowood, Panshanger, and Holland House, reminds us that 'the society of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland, and Lord Melbourne was also the society of Brougham and Mackintosh, Macaulay and Sydney Smith, Luttrell

and Samuel Rogers,' but mentions none of the women who also helped to compose it.

The moment we cross the Channel all is changed. From Mesdames de Rambouillet and de Sévigné to Madame Mohl we move in a womanly atmosphere, and have the impression that for some two centuries all the good conversation of Paris took place in some lady's *salon*; that it was led, controlled, and directed by her, while neither rank, wealth, nor beauty were indispensable qualifications for admitting her into that magnificent sisterhood which in an unbroken succession possessed the art of *tenir un salon*.

All the most famous men made part of this brilliant company; but it would seem that, with the true French gallantry of other days, they had effaced themselves before posterity, so as to leave the undivided renown to the women. Those queens of conversation sprang from so many different ranks and conditions of life! Some, like the Marquises de Rambouillet and de Sévigné, the Duchesse de Duras and Madame de Staël, born in the purple of high rank and state, breathing the atmosphere of Court and politics from their earliest years; some, and they were not the least powerful, attaining to sovereignty by their own talents. Among these we count Madame Roland, Mademoiselle Lespinasse, Sophie Arnould, and Madame Mohl. The holder of a *salon* might be old and blind, rich and powerful, poor and risen from the smallest *bourgeoisie*, a duchess or an opera singer; she need not even be very clever, but three qualities were indispensable—great tact, a sincere desire to please, and, above all, that quality so essentially French that there is no word for it in any other language—*esprit*.

One of the most brilliant of all these queens of conversation must have been Sophie Arnould; and it is thanks to a happy accident which placed her unfinished journal and a packet of her letters into the hands of the brothers De Goncourt that they were able to give to the world that short biography which ranks among the most charming of their works. Not even the 'Arnouldiana,' that collection of her *bons-mots* published in 1813; not even the life-like portrait which forms its frontispiece, with its sparkling eyes, brimming with mirth, and the parted lips, on which some brilliant witticism or repartee seems trembling, gives us so real an impression of what her genius must have been as that which the intuition of these two brother men-of-letters was able to

seize and so happily to render. Our attention is held and fascinated as they so rapidly bring before us, with the precision of a well-cut gem, the rare native qualities and gifts, the educational advantages, the fortunate circumstances of environment, that go to make up the charm of a perfect mistress of the art of conversation.

Sophie Arnould was born February 14, 1740, in the Rue des Fossés St. Germain l'Auxerrois, in the very room in which Admiral Coligny had been killed, and which had long served Vanloo as a studio, thus giving its four walls a threefold celebrity. Her parents were well-to-do *bourgeois*, and her mother seems to have been early bitten with the philosophical ideas of the day; Voltaire was among her friends, Diderot and D'Alembert were received at her table, and old Fontenelle, a few days before his death, brought her the MS. of a tragedy of Corneille's. From this strong atmosphere, all impregnated with the *Encyclopédie*, little Sophie, at the age of five, was suddenly transplanted into that of a Court.

The Princess of Modena, the separated wife of the Prince of Conti, begged the pretty, precocious child from her parents, to be her plaything, and the *distraction* of her childless and monotonous life. The talent for music, already strongly marked in the little damsel, made her a source of amusement to the Princess and her guests; sometimes she would be set to the *clavecin* and made to sing and play, sometimes for days she would be her patroness's inseparable companion, delighting her with her gay babble and pretty ways; then suddenly thrust into the ante-room among the servants, to await a fresh royal caprice of fondling and endearments.

Happily, Madame Arnould was sensible of the disadvantages of this system, and had the courage to withdraw her little daughter gradually and tactfully from its influences. Nothing was neglected for Sophie's education. At ten years of age she could speak—she tells us in her journal—Latin, English, and Italian fluently, and had learned to sing. When, the following year, she was sent to the Ursuline Convent at St. Denis to prepare for her First Communion, the fame of her lovely voice in the chapel choir soon spread abroad, and on a certain Feast of St. Augustine the Court and the town flocked to hear it, the echo reaching Voltaire in his retreat of Ferney and drawing from him a letter of congratulation to the little songstress.

At last the day came when the Queen desired to hear her, saying to the Duchesse de Conti: 'Je la veux pour moi, ma cousine, vous me la donnerez.' So, with the pomp and circumstance befitting the occasion, the Princess took Sophie in her State chariot to present her to Marie Leczinska, who received her with gentle, stately kindness and commended her singing. But, as the De Goncourts remark, there was another Queen in France—Madame de Pompadour; and the very next day she sent a letter to the Duchesse de Conti, couched in terms of supplication, such as she well knew how to use, pen in hand, entreating her to 'lend her her young singer until the evening.' The request was embarrassing. The Princess could not without a breach of *les grandes convenances* and a want of respect to the Queen take Sophie to call upon the favourite, and at the same time she seems to have had a salutary fear of offending the latter lady. The upshot of the debate strikes us nowadays as strange—it was that Madame Arnould should herself take her daughter to Madame de Pompadour. The journal gives an interesting account of this interview, which proved the turning-point in the young *bourgeoise's* career. After hearing her, the Marquise strongly urged her to make singing her profession, saying: 'Ma chère enfant, le bon Dieu vous a faite pour le théâtre; vous êtes née délibérée comme il faut y être; vous ne tremblerez pas devant le public.' Sophie describes the room, draped with green, heavily fringed with gold; the balustrade of white marble and gold, the Marquise's own desk, at which she was made to sit while singing; the conversation, which ran from subject to subject; Madame de Pompadour's tears as she interrogated her as to her singing-masters and found they were the same as those of her own young daughter, who had died a year before. Then several times such words escaped her as: 'Au premier jour on dira de moi: "feu madame de Pompadour," ou "la pauvre marquise!"' At one moment she said in a hasty aside to Madame Arnould: 'Si la reine vous demandait votre fille pour la musique de sa chambre, n'ayez pas l'imprudence d'y souscrire. Le roi vient de temps en temps à ces petits concerts de famille; et alors au lieu d'avoir donné cette enfant à la reine, vous en auriez fait présent au roi!'

A few days later a missive from the *gentilshommes de la Chambre de la Reine* arrived and spread consternation in the quiet household of Monsieur Arnould. It contained Sophie's appointment to the Queen's *Musique de Chambre*. At first there

were thoughts of flight, of hiding the young girl in a convent, for the last wish of her parents was that she should encounter the dangers of a Court or those of the theatre. After a time other counsels prevailed; the Duchesse de Conti and the other persons consulted by the anxious parents seem at last to have persuaded them that it is possible to 'faire son salut' in any state of life, that it would be dangerous to offend the Queen, and that Sophie's talents were too great to remain for ever concealed.

On December 15, 1757, Sophie Arnould made her *début* in Gluck's opera *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and took the town by storm. Shortly afterwards came the romantic episode of her first love affair; the young Comte de Brancas, hiding his title and quality under the assumed name of Dorval, getting admission, under some pretence of study, into the Arnould household, and finally running away with the daughter. She seems to have returned no more to the paternal roof, and before very long her own *salon* became the rendezvous of the most brilliant society of Paris, over which she reigned like a veritable queen. 'Elle régnait donc, et de toutes les façons,' say the De Goncourts. 'Elle ordonnait de la vogue et du goût. Elle semblait descendre à l'amitié d'illustres dames. Elle avait une cour, un petit coucher de son esprit, de sa jeunesse, de sa grâce.' There, Rousseau became tamed, and reconciled to civilisation; Garrick, when in Paris, brought thither all the hours he could spare; her Tuesdays were the 'revue merveilleuse des grands hommes, petits et grands;' the Prince de Ligne, 'ce passant de tant d'esprit,' was a constant guest; Dorat (little Dorat, said Sophie, is like a marble column, he is dry, cold and polished); D'Alembert, Duclos, and Diderot's best eloquence resounded there; Beaumarchais and Luignet, Sophie's 'frères d'esprit,' were her intimate friends and counsellors.

Some of her *mots* are current still. It was she who, in answer to the saying, 'L'esprit court les rues,' first retorted: 'C'est un bruit que les sots font courir.' Her remark on poor La Harpe's leprosy stings his literary memory still: 'C'est tout ce qu'il a des anciens;' and when she was shown a snuff-box with a portrait of Sully on the one side and Choiseul on the other: 'Oui, c'est la recette et la dépense.' More refined and delicate was the irony of her answer to the poet Bernard, whom she one day found writing his 'Art d'Aimer' under the shade of an oak tree. 'Je m'entretiens avec moi-même,' says the poet. 'Prenez garde, vous causez avec un flatteur.' Chévrier, the pamphleteer,

who had lampooned her unmercifully and written bitter satires on the principal personages of the time, died in Holland in 1762, not without suspicion of poison. 'Juste ciel!' cried Sophie Arnould, on hearing the news, 'il aura sucé sa plume.'

In one of the happiest pages that ever escaped from their pen, her two biographers give us a wonderful little study of her mind and her wit: 'Comment le saisir et le dire, cet esprit de Sophie Arnould? Il était un éblouissement, un prodige, une source intarissable de tous les esprits de la France! Il était impromptu, courant, volant; une envolée de guêpes! . . . Il était une massue et un poignard, une malice et un supplice. Il enfermait une larme dans un lazzi, une idée dans un calembour, un homme dans un ridicule. Du sublime de la gaminerie il allait à l'exquis du goût, du gros sel à l'ironie divine, de l'Opéra à Athènes. Jamais au monde si merveilleuse machine à mots que cet Sophie! et si bien dotée et si bien armée! Elle-même comparait sa tête à un miroir à facettes. Que d'étincelles et de flammes! . . . Tant de phrases, tant de mots bondis de sa bouche, gardés par l'anecdote comme la chanson, l'écho et le testament libre du xviii^e siècle! . . . Une verve argent comptant, une vision instantanée de l'intention, du sens, et de l'orthographe des paroles, des bonnes fortunes de termes, des mariages d'inclination de mots, des saillies et des épigrammes qui s'échappaient de ses lèvres, sur l'aile de la plus jolie voix du monde . . . des satires d'une ligne, des épitaphes dont les vivants ne revenaient pas, des épithètes mortelles, des riens qui sont devenus des proverbes! . . . des paroles qui ont fait l'esprit de bien des sots et la fortune de bien des causeurs; des drôleries à la pointe du mot, qui enlevaient le rire; notre jolie langue de finesses et de sous-entendus maniée dans le meilleur de ses délicatesses; un tribunal enfin, l'esprit de Sophie!'

Caught up in the whirlwind of the Revolution, her profession saved her life; but she was flung poor and destitute—robbed of patrons, admirers, and almost all her friends by the cruel guillotine—into the humble refuge of a country farm. But the finely-tempered, indomitable spirit carried her bravely through, and she could write in the fourth year of this seclusion and solitude, in a letter to her old lover Bellanger, now married to Mademoiselle Dervieux, the singer, that she had never felt one moment of *ennui*. 'Everything that surrounds me is full of variety. I had first to build . . . I have planted, cleared, sown; I have reaped, and moreover I have a poultry yard; my courtiers are numerous:

cocks and hens, turkeys, pigs, sheep, rabbits; I had some pigeons, but the cost of their keep forced me to give them up.' The last line indicates what some of her other letters sufficiently prove: that the pinch of poverty was sometimes severe. Nothing could be more charming than her letter to an ex-admirer, a member of the new Government, seeking to obtain the payment of the pension to which she was entitled as a *sociétaire* of the Opera. She treats her penury almost as a joke, and there is a humorous pathos in the way she says that 'it is hardly worth while dying of hunger—if one can help it!' The Bellangers have discovered the greatness of her need at a time of illness, and have, out of their own poverty, sent her a gold piece. Her answer, accepting it 'as a souvenir,' is a very model of frank grace and simple gratitude and affection.

Sophie's letters after the Revolution are indeed, as the De Goncourts say, 'le mets des plus délicats;' her observations on the stirring events of the time are often worthy of the keenest politician and statesman. She was one of the very first to recognise the genius of the youthful artillery officer, Napoleon. She writes of him that he is not much to look at, and that everybody is speaking ill of him. 'Mais, c'est un homme, si je m'y connais.' And from her poor solitude she writes to Bellanger the often-quoted lines accompanying a lock of her grey hair, ending:

Et l'on joint sous les cheveux blancs
Au charme de s'aimer le droit de se le dire.

Once, in mid-career, Sophie Arnould had made a sudden halt in her life of sovereign triumph, pleasure, and disorder, and had become pious. The phase was not long-lived, and, after one or two changes of confessor, she dismissed it, as usual, with an epigram to the effect that directors of consciences were as difficult to please as directors of theatres. But with age, poverty, and sorrow, the old faith returned with a sweet and invincible power. She crept back to Paris, and to her old parish to die; and there, not far from the historical room in which she had first seen the light, ministered to by the Curé of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, she breathed her last at the age of fifty-eight. We know little beyond the bare facts of that closing scene, but she no doubt brought to it those qualities of whole-heartedness and fine intelligence which had always been hers. She was the epitome of her time, of its dazzling brilliancy, its striking contradictions, and her memory as a conversationalist deserves to outlast her tomb:

Embalmed for ever in its own perfume.

It was a quaint freak of destiny which ordained that this French sceptre should have last been held by a little ugly Irish-woman, Madame Mohl, *née* Mary Clarke, and that since it fell from her reluctant grasp there has been no one to take it up, for the one or two political *salons* still existing in Paris do not come within our category. Just as strange is it that the official announcement, so to speak, of this lapse of the crown should have been made by the Emperor of the country to a foreign Queen. 'Are there any *salons* left in Paris?' asked the then Queen of Holland of Napoleon III. during her last visit at the Tuileries. 'Yes, there is one, Madame Mohl's, but she does not do me the honour of inviting me.'

The name of Madame Mohl is the link between the conversationalists of the second half of the eighteenth century and those whom we of the present day have known and have admired. From Chateaubriand to Browning, from Madame Roland and Humboldt to Huxley and Dean Stanley, who better than she could have preserved for us the memory of their talk, had it not absorbed her too intently to leave her time or liberty to record it!

For more than twenty years Browning was so prominent a figure in English society that few of those who frequented it between 1865 and 1889 can have helped preserving a vivid recollection of that king of conversationalists. The sight of his face upon entering a room, the sound of his strong and pleasant, though not musical voice, were sufficient to arrest the most casual attention, and were a sure promise of pleasure to those who knew him.

No poet that ever lived can have been freer from the slightest trace of what the French call *pose*; strong common-sense, a real intense interest in the subject he might be discussing, and—perhaps here the poetic mind unobtrusively made itself felt—conveyed in language which seemed to leave nothing unsaid that could make his meaning clearer or more complete. No one better than he could cleave at once to the heart of a question, blow away the froth of passion from an argument, or explain the causes or the consequences of some current of popular opinion or fanaticism.

Perhaps his power was the greater because it seemed so singularly free from passion; his mastery over no subject was greater than his mastery over himself, for all his intense human sympathy and vitality. Instinctively his hearers knew that the annihilated antagonist had met his fate because his cause was bad, foolish, or

otherwise unfit to live—never because it had had the ill-luck to offend Robert Browning. Even when the onslaught was most deadly, as in his attacks upon Spiritualism, that fine and ennobling characteristic was never wanting.

The obscurity, the curious fantasy which sometimes led him in his verse to discard the right word for one less apt never appeared in his discourse. There was never any need to plead, as his future wife pleads in one of the lately-published letters, for 'a flash more light on the face of Domizia,' or begs him not to be too disdainful to explain his meaning in the title of *Pomegranates*; adding, with graceful humility: 'Consider that Mr. Kenyon and I may fairly represent the average intelligence of your readers, and that *he* was altogether in the clouds as to your meaning . . . had not the most distant notion of it, while I, taking hold of the priest's garment, missed the Rabbins and the distinctive significance as completely as he did.' Another time, she urges the claim of the word 'spirits' in lieu of 'sprites,' in one of his verses: 'Why not "spirits" instead of "sprites," which has a different association by custom? 'Spirits' is quite short enough for a last word; it sounds like a monosyllable that trembles, or thrills, rather.'

In his talk there was nothing of this; the spring gushed freely, pure and strong, and there could never be a moment's doubt or hesitation as to its course or limpidity.

One of Browning's recorded sayings is that he liked religious questions treated seriously, and we know by his letters that his own belief was sincere and strong. Some twenty years ago, he told his neighbour at a dinner-party that on his way home to dress he had stopped to hear an open-air preacher in Hyde Park. The man was developing free-thinking theories, and at the moment Browning arrived was emphatically inveighing against the possible existence of God, and defying his hearers to disprove his arguments. 'At last I could stand it no longer,' said Browning, 'so I asked him to get off his tub and to let me get up and try to answer him. He did so, and I think,' he added modestly, 'that I had the best of it.' Scraps of his conversation stand out like charming pictures, defying the lapse of time. His fondness for flowers was great, and he gleefully told—one evening—how a short while before he had made the acquaintance of some charming ladies who had spoken of a wildflower growing in their part of the country, with which he was unacquainted. They had promised to send him a specimen, and duly fulfilled the promise; it

was no unimportant thing to introduce a new flower to a poet. In writing to acknowledge the pretty gift, Browning asked them to send him, as well as the botanical name they had already given, the country-people's name for the little flower. 'It shows how we should never inquire too closely into things. The ladies wrote, quite in distress, to say they had purposely avoided giving me the common name of the flowers, because the country-people called them *bloody noses*. And the worst of it was,' he added with a burst of his own hearty and infectious laughter, 'it was not at all a bad name for them. The blossom was a little double valve, not unlike a nostril in shape, and its edge was tinged with red.' But the poetry of the thing was hopelessly destroyed.

Browning tells Miss Barrett in one of his earliest letters that he 'hates dinner-parties.' His taste must have greatly changed in later years, for there was no more inveterate diner-out than he in London; and it must, for many years, have been the rarest of events for him to dine anywhere else than at a dinner-party. His conversation was there at its best, and its echo must linger yet in the ears of those who are happy enough to have known it. An odd little human trait about him was his habit of putting his *menu* into his pocket at the end of the dinner. 'I collect them,' he said simply, to a lady in answer to a somewhat amused smile of inquiry.

It was not always a happy thing to have Browning and Leighton at the same dinner, if the party was a small one. They both answered too well to the description of the 'harpsichord' in that same 'Tatler' of 1710: 'The very few persons who are masters in every kind of conversation and can talk on all subjects'—comparing them, 'endowed with such extraordinary talents,' to 'harpsichords, a kind of music which everyone knows is a concert by itself.'

The striking characteristic of Leighton's conversation was its cosmopolitanism. He was equally at home in the various subjects which most interested the principal nationalities of Europe, and he seemed literally to speak to every man in his own tongue as well as or better than he could himself, and with a purity of accent that often led to amusing mistakes. Italians took him for an Italian until they heard his German or his French; and the way in which, when his studio was filled with a crowd of visitors from all parts of the world, he darted from language to language in his hospitable welcome and explanations of his pictures, was marvellous.

He knew several dialects and *patois* as well, and for some years had a servant, a Roumanian or Hungarian, with whom he could speak freely in his own *patois*.

If Browning's talk left behind it an impression of power and strength and clear-mindedness which would make a man or woman go to him most readily for counsel or advice, that of Leighton made anyone ready to appeal to him for an act of kindness or good-nature with the certainty that he would attempt the impossible to accomplish it. He had the happy knack of always saying the right thing, and a royal memory, not only of faces but of the histories of even his more insignificant acquaintances. 'I had not seen Leighton for years,' exclaimed a gratified little man, 'when I met him in the street the other day, and he immediately stopped and congratulated me on my appointment, saying I was the right man in the right place,' &c. Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely, and were the secret of his popularity.

His urbanity and tact as a host were exquisite, whether he was receiving the whole world of fashion and art as President of the Royal Academy, or at his musical parties in his studio, or, again, at his dinners. On an occasion when a very awkward social difficulty had arisen, sufficient to nonplus the most tactful, a lady paid him the compliment of saying: 'Even Leighton's *savoir-faire* was almost at fault—but it carried him through.' At his dinners there was, perhaps, a trifle of what the French call *apprêt*, his own seat raised a little higher than that of his guests, his rôle of Amphytrion taken perhaps a thought too seriously, raising a smile in the irreverent, as there was sometimes in his Academy dinner speeches a lack of spontaneity and a certain searching after effect, which 'Punch' once caricatured by representing him seated in his study 'seeing how many beautiful new words he could invent for his next speech.'

These were only the 'defects of his qualities' as a speaker and a converser, and all who knew him would endorse the exclamation of a young girl many years ago, who, on hearing the description of a thoroughly kind-hearted and good-natured man read out from a letter at a Scotch breakfast-table, cried out: 'That is why *everybody* likes Fay!' the name he was known by among the children of his acquaintance. The sunny, genial gladness in his quiet 'That's very nice of you!' would have gone far to prove the truth of her words, even without the murmur of acquiescence that went round the table.

The qualities of the late Lord Coleridge as an agreeable talker have been widely and deservedly proclaimed. Those of his predecessor in the high office of Chief Justice of England—Sir Alexander Cockburn—were at least equal, if not superior. His store of varied knowledge was as great, and dated back to a remoter epoch, his voice and elocution were as perfect as Lord Coleridge's, and he was more a man of the world, being, indeed, one of the leaders of the society of his day. The *soirées* and dinners at his house in Hertford Street were things to be remembered by those who were privileged to be his guests, and to meet at his table such people as Sir William and Lady Molesworth, Bulwer Lytton, Mr. and Mrs. Sartoris, Lady Waldegrave, Chorley, Richard Doyle, Sir Charles Hallé, leading statesmen, *littérateurs*, and artists. He was a charming host, unsurpassed as a storyteller. To hear him relate some humorous anecdote of the lawyers of bygone days, 'when St. Martin's-in-the-Fields was still surrounded with open ground,' was an incomparable treat. His stories occasionally dated from a time when language was a little more forcible and picturesque than at present, and he used more action in speaking than is usual among Englishmen, though his gestures were never more emphatic than the occasion required, and always gave the completest point to his story. There was one about a starched old lawyer and a street Arab, in which his mimicry of both was equally perfect and finished.

His table was never too large to permit him to take part in the conversation at any part of it, and he had the happiest faculty of joining in at the right moment to add life and interest to a subject. On one occasion his ear caught an exclamation of regret from one of his guests that judges had not the prerogative of mercy. The lady had seen a postman condemned to five years' imprisonment for stealing a letter containing a few shillings, and the man's evident remorse, his wife's scream from the gallery, the scene of her being carried out fainting, had made her feel that if mercy could have been extended to the culprit he would have lived honestly ever after. Cockburn, in a few feeling words, explained the extent and limitations of human justice with so much humanity and insight into the workings of the mind, that it seemed as if nothing further could be said on the subject, and then turned easily and lightly to some less serious topic.

A well-marked place among the conversationalists of his day

was held by Henry Fothergill Chorley, the once formidable critic of the 'Athenæum.' His dinners at his tiny house in Eaton Place West, all 'white and gold and crimson satin,' as Mrs. Browning describes it in one of her letters, were famous. Notabilities from every land met there, men and women belonging to the three aristocracies of birth, talent, and wealth—that of talent so often the link between the other two—and delightful was the talk. So competent a judge as Sir Charles Hallé, writing of Chorley in his memoirs, describes him as 'a man of strong views, fearless in his criticism, perfectly honest, although often and unconsciously swayed by personal antipathies and sympathies.'

Of his oddities, of the whimsical tone and gestures with which his tart and often paradoxical little sentences were delivered, it is almost hopeless to attempt to convey an idea. In face, figure, manners, and voice he was quite unlike anybody else. The meagre body always moved in jerks, or remained in absolute immobility according to the mood of the moment, and the head, small, red-haired, when to be red-haired was considered almost a disgrace, with curiously-slit eyes and pointed ears, had a brick-hued complexion, which, combined with his love for gorgeous colour in his dress, gave rise to the saying that 'everything about Chorley was red but his books,' with reference to the curious want of success of his not uninteresting works.

Perhaps the quaintness with which he loved to clothe his sentiments was less successful in his writing than in his speech; and it says much for the genuine qualities and cleverness of his talk that he should have held the place he did in society despite such natural disadvantages. He bore the little rubs which they unavoidably occasioned with absolute imperturbability. On one occasion a little child, seeing him for the first time, after a few minutes' fascinated contemplation, suddenly burst out with 'Why *is* you so like a monkey?' and when its agonised mother tried to stop the question, turned to her with almost tearful persistency: 'But, mamma, why *is* he so like a monkey?'

His love of colour was, according to Richard Doyle, the natural consequence of his coming of a Quaker family; and Doyle had a story of a brother of Chorley's who caused scandal among the Society of Friends by wearing a red coat for fox-hunting. When remonstrated with, he explained that his coat 'was only of a fiery drab!' Chorley continued to wear velvet waistcoats of

gorgeous colour in the evening long after they had ceased to be the fashion, and one night at some great party he was leaning against the wall of the staircase in an attitude of immobility, when some young men began to whisper remarks to each other on his appearance. His motionless impassiveness led them on, and when one of them had suggested that 'he must be a foreigner,' the tongues wagged more freely still. When they had exhausted their remarks about himself, one cried: 'And just look at his waistcoat. Was there ever such a waistcoat to be seen?' At this, Chorley slowly detached himself from the wall, stepped silently forward, and with his usual spasmodic waving of his hand in front of his face, said in his high thin voice: 'Gentlemen, say what you please of myself, but pray spare my waistcoat,' and then returned to his place, while his young critics hastened from the scene. He used to tell this story himself.

Even when illness and infirmity had clouded his closing years, there were times when the old wit and eccentric pungent criticism still flashed out, and made one apprehend something of their former charm. The honesty and good faith of his most wayward opinions were always indisputable.

The memory of so many eloquent voices that have passed into the great silence, and of the kindly hearts which prompted their best utterances, might lead one on indefinitely to recall the scattered fragments of their talk, and to forget how hopeless is the task of reproducing more than the very faintest echo of that 'Concert's music.'

PROVINCIAL LETTERS.

VII.—FROM BATH.

FROM early childhood Bath has been associated with some of my happiest and some of my most disconcerting experiences. As far back as I can remember there were buns and there were Bath buns; and the aunt who would offer a mere bun took a far lower place in the hierarchy of relationship than the uncle who administered the bun of Bath. Then again, by a trick of memory for which I can find no sufficient reason, the sole remaining impression of my first pantomime is the entry of Clown pushing along Pantaloon in a Bath chair (which he soon took occasion to upset), and shouting, 'Here's a Bath chap going to Bath in a Bath chair.' It certainly was not the pun that took my fancy, for I could not have known at that tender age what a Bath chap was. Probably the dramatic *peripeteia* was carefully noted for repetition at home with the perambulator, and the words were retained as a necessary part of the piece. But, on the other hand, how disagreeable it was at school to be told to go to Bath. From the tone in which the words were said, it was certain that nothing pleasant was meant; and hence disagreeable associations gradually superseded the more pleasant ones of earlier childhood. Bath grew to be another Coventry: a place to which a person of honour must not be sent; and although in later years I came to understand the phrase as a polite euphemism for Purgatory—no doubt suggested by the hot springs—yet in the inscrutable working of desire, that schoolboy saying has operated to prevent my visiting Bath, until I am driven there by causes which I will not detail. But now, having seen Bath, I am overcome with remorse at the long delay. If only I had years ago taken my playmates at their word instead of suffering myself to be deterred by their spiteful tone, how different my life might have been! Austin became a saint through paying heed to a chance sentence overheard in a children's game; Whittington became Lord Mayor of London through not despising the suggestion of Bow Bells. If I, in like manner, had gone to Bath in boyhood, what might I not have become?

Still, though late, I am here at last ; and already I am become a devout Bathonian. It so happened that my course from the railway station lay across Pulteney Bridge to the eastern side of the town, and at once I acknowledged the superiority of the architecture to anything I had seen in Bloomsbury. At first it was Pulteney Street that captured my admiration. The façades were magnificent, but saved from being grandiose by the niceness of their proportion and the delicacy of the ornament. Then, on retracing my steps, I discovered Pulteney Bridge. On first crossing I had not recognised it for a bridge at all because of the houses on either side ; but on turning to the left I saw the river, and, walking along the embankment for a hundred yards and then turning, I was arrested by the beauty of what revealed itself as a bridge. I have since learned that the architect was Adam, and the design is indeed worthy of Paradise. The Pulteney whose name is thus commemorated was an heiress of the house of Bath, who, having a property on the east bank of the river, resolved, like Dido, to build a city there that should preserve her memory and augment the fortune of her descendants ; and to that end she had the wisdom to employ the best architects of her time. She threw this graceful street upon three piers across the river, and continued it in a succession of palaces to the Sydney gardens, which were the Vauxhall of Bath. After feasting my eyes upon the fine proportions of the bridge, and endeavouring to be blind to the presence of the modern spirit in three disfiguring advertisements upon it, I turned away and saw upon the right hand a mammoth building. If the bridge suggested Paradise, here was undoubtedly the Tower of Babel. What did it mean ? I searched my guide-book, but its date was 1762, while the building in question was glistening with newness. I soon discovered it to be an hotel, 'replete with every modern convenience,' and a little later I discovered from an old print that it had taken the place of a beautiful old mansion, called popularly the Prince of Orange House, where a Prince of the House of Nassau was reputed to have stayed while he took the waters. In memory of his successful treatment an obelisk was reared in the centre of what is still called Orange Grove, though the grove has vanished. In the print of which I speak, a party of delightful children are being ferried across from the house to play and drink tea in the meadows. Will anyone ever cross from the Tower of Babel for so innocent a diversion ? O ! ghost of Frances Pulteney

and ghost of Robert Adam, if any rumour of these things touch your minds among the asphodels, can you not contrive some significant omen that shall shake the knees of the Mayor and Corporation and prevent their pursuing so vandal-like a policy of destruction? Turn the turtle-soup at their feasts to mock-turtle before their eyes; send a frenzy of anti-vaccination upon the Board of Guardians, and frighten away all the visitors; cry 'Revenge' in a hollow voice whenever a spinster of nervous complexion enters the hotel. It is worth while adventuring some notable step to persuade the authorities that they are on a wrong tack. For the beauty of Bath is the beauty of an age when architects had both taste and science, and nothing that can be erected to-day is able to compensate for the loss of a single house of the great period.

The name of the great builder of Bath, as we at present know that 'pleasurable city,' has yet to be mentioned; it was John Wood. There were two John Woods, father and son; but they worked together, and the son in many cases finished what the father planned. The elder Wood came to Bath in 1727 at a time when the city was rapidly becoming a fashionable watering-place, under the judicious management of Beau Nash and the recommendation of Court physicians; so that no fairer field could have been open to his talents. The North and South Parades were the first witnesses to his skill in designing streets which should be something more than an agglomeration of houses. In contemporary prints we see the beaux and nymphs disporting themselves on the flags and leaning upon the balustrades. Now the flags are up and the balustrades are down, and a dead level of macadamised road has turned the parades into commonplace streets. *O miseris hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!* Here, O! town councillors, is a riddle for you: When is a parade not a parade? The answer is, When it has been so improved that all its beauty is gone, and no one cares to parade there any longer. Not the least of the beauties of Bath are the streets and courts which still remain flagged, such as Duke Street, which unites these two Parades and silently testifies against the modern spirit that has destroyed them. But to return to John Wood. His second enterprise was Queen Square, and beyond that to the north he designed what is known as the Circus, on the summit of the hill up which Gay Street climbs from Queen Square. The Circus is an ellipse composed of thirty houses, of three storeys. The windows are separated by double

columns, those on the ground floor being Doric, on the first floor Ionic, and on the second floor Corinthian, while round the top runs a balustrade. The effect is singularly rich. John Wood, Junior, completed the Circus after his father's death, but his own name is best connected with the two vast crescents which crown the heights and command the prospect of the city. There is no need to enumerate here the other masterpieces of these men of worship. The visitor to Bath has but to look around him, and the stranger to Bath would gain no pleasure from a bare enumeration. The two houses, nevertheless, must not be omitted which Wood built for Ralph Allen, the 'man of Bath.' The one in Prior Park, with its magnificent Corinthian columns, three feet in diameter, is visible from the city except in a fog; but where is the town-house? Here is another riddle which I respectfully offer to the Mayor and Corporation.

So far nothing has been said in my letter about what is the heart and soul of Bath, namely, its bathing. The story of King Bladud of Britain, father of the better known King Lear, who was driven from court for his leprosy, and, after turning swineherd and infecting his master's pigs, was cured by following their example and wallowing in the hot marsh, will be found in the guide-books diversified with many picturesque details. King Bladud, then, founded Bath; but the Bath of King Bladud was assuredly what Plato called 'a city of pigs.' The first city of men here was built by the Romans. It is only within the last twenty years that the inhabitants have become aware to what admirable use the Romans had put the Bath springs. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Duke of Kingston, in digging the foundations of a new building, found a Roman bath twenty feet under ground, which was converted into the present Kingston Bath. The more recent discoveries are exposed to view, and left in their original state; indeed, so keen has become the antiquarian frenzy that what was long known as the Queen's Bath has been sacrificed in order to uncover a circular Roman bath that lay beneath it. As I have hinted above a certain dislike of the modern methods of the Bath Corporation, it is but justice to give them credit for their public spirit in laying bare these most interesting relics. There stands the bath now, as it stood at the date of the Christian era, in a hall 120 feet long and 70 feet wide. But even here the fathers of the city have shown how little they are to be trusted in matters of taste. All round the bath, at a great height, are

ranged upon pedestals the statues of distinguished Romans, as though making up their minds to the plunge. Julius Cæsar, for some reason, looks especially reluctant.

The first person of quality of whom we are told as resorting here for the benefit of the waters was Queen Anne, wife of James I., after whom the Queen's Bath was named; and she was followed by the consorts of the remaining Stuart kings. The historians of Bath do not tell us whether the King's Bath was so called after King Bladud; but from his statue being erected there the unlearned visitor is inclined to draw that inference. At any rate there is no record of any British monarch since Bladud having patronised the bath, though several have visited the city. The aspect of the baths in the seventeenth century is admirably given in a drawing preserved in the British Museum, dated 1675, and reproduced in Major Davis's book on 'The Mineral Baths of Bath.' All round the baths is a handsome balustrade upon which people of fashion are leaning to watch the bathers. In the Queen's Bath they are so close packed that there is little room for the water; but in the King's some persons are floating or swimming, and boys are taking headers off the balustrade. The baths are closely hemmed in by houses in which the bathers lodged; and most of the windows are occupied by interested spectators. The scene, in fact, is pretty much what Pepys described on his visit a few years previously:

June 13th, 1668.—Up at four o'clock, being by appointment called up to the Cross Bath; where we were carried after one another, myself and wife and Betty Turner, Willet, and W. Hewer. And by and by, though we designed to have done before company come, much company come; very fine ladies; and the manner pretty enough, only methinks it cannot be clean to go so many bodies together in the same water. Good conversation among them that are acquainted here and stay together. Strange to see how hot the water is; and in some places, though this is the most temperate bath, the springs so hot as the feet not able to endure. But strange to see, when women and men here, that live all the season in these waters, cannot but be parboiled and look like the creatures of the bath! Carried away wrapped in a sheet, and in a chair home; and there one after another thus carried (I staying above two hours in the water) home to bed, sweating for an hour. And by and by comes musick to play to me, extraordinary good as ever I heard at London almost anywhere: 5s.

15th.—Looked into the baths, and find the King and Queene's full of a mixed sort of good and bad, and the Cross only almost for the gentry. So home with my wife, and did pay my guides, two women 5s.; one man 2s. 6d.; poor 6d.; woman to lay my foot cloth, 1s. Before I took coach I went to make a boy dive in the King's bath, 1s.

For the eighteenth century bathing the classical place is a

once very popular but now little read poem by Christopher Anstey, called 'The New Bath Guide.' Considering its date, it is singularly free from coarseness, and the rhymes canter along with a good deal of humour. Its alternative title is 'Memoirs of the B-r-d Family,' which a London bookseller once explained to me as 'Bernard'; but Anstey meant 'Blunderhead.' For a specimen we may take the passage where Mr. Simkin Blunderhead writes home to his mother an account of his commencing *beau garçon*.

So lively, so gay, my dear mother, I'm grown,
I long to do something to make myself known;
For Persons of *Taste* and true *Spirit*, I find,
Are fond of attracting the Eyes of Mankind.
What numbers one sees who for that very reason
Come to make such a figure at *Bath* every season.
Thank Heaven! of late, my dear Mother, my Face is
Not a little regarded at all public places;
For I ride in a Chair with my Hands in a Muff,
And have bought a Silk Coat and embroidered the Cuff;
And what can a man of true Fashion denote
Like an ell of good Ribbon ty'd under the throat?
My Buckles and Box are in exquisite taste;
The one is of Paper, the other of Paste;
But sure no *Camayeu* was ever yet seen
Like that which I purchased at Wicksted's Machine:
So I'd have them to know when I go to the Ball,
I shall show as much *Taste* as the best of them all;
For a Man of great Fashion was heard to declare
He never beheld so engaging an Air,
And swears all the World must my Judgment confess,
My *Solidity*, *Sense*, *Understanding* in Dress,
My manners so form'd, and my Wig so well curl'd,
I look like a Man of the very first World.

The literary associations of Bath are almost overwhelming. Everybody who was anybody went to Bath in the eighteenth century, and where people of leisure congregate there also will authors be gathered together. Roughly, the chief periods of literary interest in Bath are those of Beau Nash, who, if not literary in himself, was the cause of literature in others, of Dr. Johnson, of Miss Austen, and of Dickens. Beau Nash, however, craves a moment's attention on his own account. A recent authority upon Bath, Mr. R. E. Peach, in whose 'Historic Houses' the reader will find a vast store of amusing information, loses no opportunity of vilipending Nash, and will have it that his influence upon the prosperity of Bath has been greatly overrated. But Goldsmith's charming *Life* was written the year after Nash's death, when the

facts were readily ascertainable and when there was nothing to be gained by exaggerating his importance. Moreover, the Bath guide (1762) amply confirms Goldsmith. As this authority is less easy to consult, and may be reckoned a more unprejudiced witness, I shall take leave to extract a few sentences :

About the year 1703 the City of Bath became in some Measure frequented by People of Distinction. The Company was numerous enough to form a Country-Dance upon the Bowling-Green ; they were amused with the Violin and Hautboy, and diverted with the romantic Walks around the City. Captain Webster was the Predecessor of Mr. Nash. This Gentleman in the year 1704 carried the Balls to the Town-Hall, each man paying half-a-guinea a Ball. The Amusements of the Place were neither elegant, nor conducted with Delicacy. This was the Situation of Things when Mr. Nash began to preside over the Amusements of the Place. His first care was to promote a Music Subscription ; the Pump-room was put under the Care of a proper Officer ; large Sums were raised for repairing the Roads about the City ; the Houses and Streets began to improve, and ornaments were lavished upon them even to profusion.

He was born to govern. His Dominion was not like that of other Legislators over the servility of the Vulgar, but over the Pride of the Noble and the Opulent. By the force of Genius he erected the City of BATH into a Province of Pleasure, and became by universal consent its Legislator and Ruler. He plann'd, improv'd, and regulated all the Amusements of the Place ; his fundamental Law was that of Good-Breeding ; hold sacred Decency and Decorum his constant Maxim ; nobody, however exalted by Beauty, Blood, Titles, or Riches, could be guilty of a Breach of it unpunished : The Penalty, *His Disapprobation and Public Shame*. To maintain the Sovereignty he had established he published Rules of Behaviour, which (from their Propriety) acquired the force of Laws ; and which the Highest never infring'd, without immediately undergoing the Public Censure. He *kept the Men in Order* ; by wisely prohibiting the wearing Swords in his Dominion : by which Means he prevented sudden Passion from causing the Bitterness of unavailing Repentance. He *kept the Ladies in Good Humour and Decorum* ; by a nice observance of the Rules of Place and Precedence ; by ordaining Scandal to be the infallible Mark of a foolish Head and a malicious Heart ; always rendering more suspicious the Reputation of her who propagated it than that of the Person abused. Of the young, the gay, the heedless Fair, just launching upon the dangerous Sea of Pleasure, he was ever unsolicited (sometimes unregarded) the kind Protector ; humanely correcting even the Mistakes in Dress, as well as Improprieties in Conduct. Nay, often warning them, tho' at the Hazard of his Life, against the artful snares of designing men. Thus did he establish his Government on Pillars of Honour and Politeness, which could never be shaken. And maintained it for full half a century with Reputation, Honour, and undisputed Authority, beloved, respected, and revered.

Goldsmith's Life contains many anecdotes which illustrate the portrait here drawn, and show Nash to have been an ideal master of ceremonies, not to be disobeyed by Princesses of the blood, or brow-beaten by duchesses, or bullied by rakes, and always good-natured. It is not affirmed that he was either a wise or a religious man ; in an attempt to interfere with John Wesley he came badly

off¹; and it is not denied that he depended for a living upon the profits of the card-tables.

The literary world of Bath at this period found its Mæcenas in a very remarkable man, Ralph Allen, the son of a small Cornish innkeeper, who as a postmaster of Bath devised and farmed a system of cross-country posts by which he made an income of 12,000*l.* a year, which he spent generously. He owned also the quarries from which the stone came for the improvements of Bath. He is admitted to be the Squire Allworthy of 'Tom Jones'; and Fielding dedicated to him his 'Amelia.' Pope made Allen's acquaintance in 1736 and put him into his 'Satires of Horace':

Let low-born Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame;

subsequently amending the epithet to 'humble'; not, it is said, by request. Of course, Pope quarrelled with him, but a quarrel with Allen could not last long. Unfortunately, while it lasted Pope made his will, by which he bequeathed to Allen 150*l.*, 'being to the best of my calculation the amount of what I have received from him, partly for my own and partly for charitable uses.' Upon which Allen is said to have remarked with a smile that Pope had forgotten the final '0.' While Pope was staying at Prior Park he summoned Warburton to his side to aid in the annotation of his 'Moral Essays,' and this was the foundation of that divine's fortune. For Allen induced Pitt to make him Bishop of Gloucester, and he married Allen's favourite niece, and succeeded to Prior Park. Allen died in 1764, so that Dr. Johnson, whose first visit to Bath was in 1776, did not meet him. A link between the two eras is found in the person of Richard Graves, the rector of Claverton, near Bath, who was a literary person of enormous output, but is now chiefly remembered as the friend and correspondent of Shenstone, and the author of 'The Spiritual Quixote,' a skit upon Methodism. He was a constant visitor at Prior Park, and numbered among his

¹ Wesley's Journal, June 5, 1739: 'There was great expectation at Bath of what a noted man was to do to me there; and I was much entreated not to preach, because no one knew what might happen. . . . Many of them were sinking apace into seriousness when their champion appeared, and, coming close to me, asked by what authority I did these things. . . . "Your preaching frightens people out of their wits." "Sir, did you ever hear me preach?" "No." "How then can you judge of what you never heard?" "Sir, by common report." "Common report is not enough. Give me leave, sir, to ask: Is not your name Nash?" "My name is Nash." "Sir, I dare not judge of you by common report."'

many pupils the sons of both Allen and Warburton. On account of the distance of Claverton from Bath, he was allowed the privilege of dining in boots; and, being an absent-minded person, is reported on more than one occasion to have left the dining-room with his napkin caught upon his spurs. I have, I confess, a tenderness for Mr. Graves on more accounts than one. A print after his picture by Gainsborough, himself a noted resident, hangs among my worthies, and shews the high forehead and refined features of the scholar and gentleman that he was, while his eye and mouth testify to his kindly humour. His verses are no longer read, being amateurish at best; but one piece I know too well, as it was the occasion of the first copy of Latin verses I ever perpetrated. 'Again the balmy zephyr blows,' sang the poet; 'Iam iterum Zephyrus,' began my version; and my teacher was not pleased. For the rest there are occasional verses on Bath and his Bath acquaintance, interesting to those who know the set he lived in, but caviare to the general reader. There are lines to Bull, the bookseller, where the wits assembled, chief among them Harington, the doctor and musician, who wrote Beau Nash's epitaph¹; lines to Mr. W[alker] on his Roman medals; to Mrs. M[iller] on her *bouts-rimés* at Bath-easton; to Mrs. B[amfylde], on her exquisite needlework; to Mrs. W[arburton], as Venus; to Mrs. C. Macaulay, on her scheme for popular government, not so trenchant as Dr. Johnson's invitation to her to summon her footman to join the party at dinner; to Molly at Nando's; to —, Esq., the quack doctor; to the Bishop of Cloyne on his tar-water; to Mr. Gainsborough, equally excellent in landscape and portraits; and to many fair ladies half-revealed and half-concealed by initials and asterisks.

Of Mrs., better known as Lady, Miller a word must be said. Her husband, afterwards created a baronet, had purchased in Italy

¹ Adeste O cives, adeste Lugentes!
Hic silent Leges

RICARDI NASH, Armig.

Nihil amplius imperantis;

Qui diu et utilissime

Assumptus Bathoniæ

Elegantiae Arbitr

Eheu!

Morti (ultimo designatori)

Haud indecore succubuit

Ann. Dom. MDCCLXI, Ætat. suæ LXXXVII.

an antique vase, and this being set up in the garden, it was the fashion for the company at fortnightly parties to place therein poetical effusions upon a suggested subject, or *bouts-rimés*, which were then read in public and judged by a committee, the victor being crowned with myrtle by her ladyship. Miss Burney tells us in her diary that, although Bath-easton was laughed at in London, nothing was more tonish at Bath than to visit Lady Miller. She goes on to describe her with feminine unkindness as 'a round, plump, coarse-looking dame of about forty' [in 1780], whose aim was to appear an elegant woman of fashion, 'but all her success is to seem an ordinary woman in *very* common life with fine clothes on.' Perhaps, by the side of this description, it may be wise to set Mr. Graves' poetical tribute and then strike a balance:

Myra, by ev'ry art refin'd,
That Science can dispense;
Genius with various Learning join'd;
Politeness with good sense.

What Dr. Johnson thought of these Olympic contests and the share taken in them by her Grace of Northumberland, Boswell has told us. 'Sir, I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady. Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases; nobody will say anything to a lady of her high rank. But I should be apt to throw . . . 's verses in his face.' This was in 1775; Horace Walpole in the same year devotes a few biting sentences to Mrs. Calliope Miller and the flux of quality at her Parnassus Fair. Of Johnson himself at Bath there is nothing especial to relate, but his friend Mrs. Thrale was a personage there, and after her first husband's death and her marriage with Piozzi lived there permanently. We are allowed to see her attending the ministrations of the Rev. Dr. Randolph, at Laura Chapel, where she occupied a 'recess'—*i.e.* a furnished apartment with fireplace, armchairs, and everything handsome about her. One characteristic story is told of Goldsmith at Bath, that while a visitor at Lord Clare's in the North Parade he inadvertently entered the house of the Duke of Northumberland, who lived next door, and did not find his mistake till the supposed guest whom he discovered in the room invited him to stay breakfast.

It would be a labour of love to chronicle all the streets and houses in Bath immortalised by the characters in Miss Austen's novels; for I agree with Miss Mitford that her 'celebrities' are

more real than those who actually lived. I visited all the historic sites with emotion, and was seized with an impulse to reside myself for the rest of my natural life at 4 Sydney Place, which happened to be to let. But the task I speak of has been quite recently performed by a more elegant pen than mine in Miss Constance Hill's admirable book, to which I refer the interested reader. Instead let me spend a few moments in the Abbey Church. As a church it has certain peculiarities which I prefer to describe in the phrases of my guide-book. 'This church may be justly called the lanthorn of England, for its lightsomeness, stateliness, and elegance of structure, and is reckoned by all Judges who have seen it, to yield the curious Stranger as much Speculation as perhaps can be met with in any Parochial Church of the same Standing in the World.' The Abbey Church, that is to say, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, will not compete with 'an old' church; for it is late perpendicular Gothic of the most debased kind, and is undoubtedly the parent of both Fonthill and Strawberry Hill. The walls are lined with eighteenth-century monuments, and these yield the curious stranger a vast amount of speculation. Here are to be found Garrick's celebrated lines on Quin, to whom many pages are devoted in any book of Bath anecdotes; here are Harington's lines on Beau Nash, already quoted; a long Latin epitaph on Dr. Harington himself, a longer one still on Dr. Oliver, the father of the inventor of the biscuit; and there are innumerable other doctors immortalised among the spinsters, relicts, and major-generals whose bathing they superintended; but I found two small tablets which gave me peculiar pleasure—one was to the memory of Mrs. Rebecca Cowper, widow of the late Rev. Dr. John Cowper, rector of Great Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire; the other belonged to a certain Edward Jesup, Esq., who amid columns of panegyric all about him is described simply as 'a man of strict honour and probity.'

P.S.—I remarked in the Pump-room a ticket on an antique 'incised inscription,' that would have delighted Dickens. It was as follows: 'Read by Prof. Sayce as a record of the cure of a Roman lady by the Bath waters, attested by three witnesses; read by Prof. Zangermeister as a curse on a man for stealing a table-cloth.'

URBANUS SYLVAN.

*THE FOUR FEATHERS.*¹

BY A. E. W. MASON.

CHAPTER X.

THE WELLS OF OBAK.

IN that month of May Durrance lifted his eyes from Wadi Halfa and began eagerly to look homewards. But in the contrary direction, five hundred miles to the south of his frontier town, on the other side of the great Nubian desert and the Belly of Stones, the events of real importance to him were occurring without his knowledge. On the deserted track between Berber and Suakin the wells of Obak are sunk deep amongst mounds of shifting sand. Eastwards a belt of trees divides the dunes from a hard stony plain built upon with granite hills; westwards the desert stretches for fifty-eight waterless miles to Mahobey and Berber on the Nile, a desert so flat that the merest tuft of grass knee-high seems at the distance of a mile a tree promising shade for a noonday halt, and a pile of stones no bigger than one might see by the side of any roadway in repair achieves the stature of a considerable hill. In this particular May there could be no spot more desolate than the wells of Obak. The sun blazed upon it from six in the morning with an intolerable heat, and all night the wind blew across it piercingly cold, and played with the sand as it would, building pyramids house-high and levelling them, tunnelling valleys, silting up long slopes, so that the face of the country was continually changed. The vultures and the sand-grouse held it undisturbed in a perpetual tenancy. And to make the spot yet more desolate there remained scattered here and there the bleached bones and skeletons of camels to bear evidence that about these wells once the caravans had crossed and halted; and the remnants of a house built of branches bent in hoops showed that once Arabs had herded their goats and made their habitation there. Now the sun rose and set and the hot sky pressed upon an empty round of honey-coloured earth. Silence brooded there

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like night upon the waters; and the absolute stillness made it a place of mystery and expectation.

Yet in this month of May one man sojourned by the wells and sojourned secretly. Every morning at sunrise he drove two camels, swift riding mares of the pure Bisharin breed, from the belt of trees, watered them, and sat by the well-mouth for the space of three hours. Then he drove them back again into the shelter of the trees, and fed them delicately with dhoura upon a cloth; and for the rest of the day he appeared no more. For five mornings he thus came from his hiding-place and sat looking towards the sand-dunes and Berber, and no one approached him. But on the sixth, and as he was on the point of returning to his shelter, he saw the figure of a man and a donkey suddenly outlined against the sky upon a crest of the sand. The Arab seated by the well looked first at the donkey, and, remarking its grey colour, half rose to his feet. But as he rose he looked at the man who drove it, and saw that while his jellab was drawn forward over his face to protect it from the sun, his bare legs showed of an ebony blackness against the sand. The donkey driver was a negro. The Arab sat down again and waited with an air of the most complete indifference for the stranger to descend to him. He did not even move or turn when he heard the negro's feet tread the sand close behind him.

'Salam aleikum,' said the negro as he stopped. He carried a long spear and a short one, and a shield of hide. These he laid upon the ground and sat by the Arab's side.

The Arab bowed his head and returned the salutation.

'Aleikum es salam,' said he, and he waited.

'It is Abou Fatma?' asked the negro.

The Arab nodded an assent.

'Two days ago,' the other continued, 'a man of the Bisharin, Moussa Fedil, stopped me in the market-place of Berber, and seeing that I was hungry gave me food. And when I had eaten he charged me to drive this donkey to Abou Fatma at the wells of Obak.'

Abou Fatma looked carelessly at the donkey as though now for the first time he had remarked it.

'Tayeeb,' he said no less carelessly. 'The donkey is mine,' and he sat inattentive and motionless as though the negro's business were done and he might go.

The negro, however, held his ground.

'I am to meet Moussa Fedil again on the third morning from now, in the market-place of Berber. Give me a token which I may carry back, so that he may know I have fulfilled the charge and reward me.'

Abou Fatma took his knife from the small of his back, and picking up a stick from the ground, notched it thrice at each end.

'This shall be a sign to Moussa Fedil;' and he handed the stick to his companion. The negro tied it securely into a corner of his wrap, loosed his water-skin from the donkey's back, filled it at the well and slung it about his shoulders. Then he picked up his spears and his shield. Abou Fatma watched him labour up the slope of loose sand and disappear again on the further incline of the crest. Then in his turn he rose and hastily. When Harry Feversham had set out from Obak six days before to traverse the fifty-eight miles of barren desert to the Nile, this grey donkey had carried his water-skins and food.

Abou Fatma drove the donkey down amongst the trees, and fastening it to a stem examined its shoulders. In the left shoulder a tiny incision had been made and the skin neatly stitched up again with fine thread. He cut the stitches, and pressing open the two edges of the wound, forced out a tiny package little bigger than a postage stamp. The package was a goat's bladder, and enclosed within the bladder a note written in Arabic and folded very small. Abou Fatma had not been Gordon's body servant for nothing; he had been taught during his service to read. He unfolded the note, and this is what was written:

'The houses which were once Berber are destroyed and a new town of wide streets is building. There is no longer any sign by which I may know the ruins of Yusef's house from the ruins of a hundred houses; nor does Yusef any longer sell rock-salt in the bazaar. Yet wait for me another week.'

The Arab of the Bisharin who wrote the letter was Harry Feversham. Wearing the patched jubbeh of the Dervishes over his stained skin, his hair frizzed on the crown of his head and falling upon the nape of his neck in locks matted and gummed into the semblance of seaweed, he went about his search for Yusef through the wide streets of New Berber with its gaping pits. To the south, and separated by a mile or so of desert, lay the old town where Abou Fatma had slept one night and hidden the letters, a warren of ruined houses facing upon narrow alleys and winding

streets. The front walls had all been pulled down, the roofs carried away, only the bare inner walls were left standing, so that Feversham when he wandered amongst them vainly at night seemed to have come into long lanes of five courts, crumbling into decay. And each court was only distinguishable from its neighbour by a degree of ruin. Already the foxes made their burrows beneath the walls.

He had calculated that one night would have been the term of his stay in Berber. He was to have crept through the gate in the dusk of the evening, and before the grey light had quenched the stars his face should be set towards Obak. Now he must go steadily forward amongst the crowds like a man that has business of moment, dreading conversation lest his tongue should betray him, listening ever for the name of Yusef to strike upon his ears. Despair kept him company at times, and fear always. But from the sharp pangs of these emotions a sort of madness was begotten in him, a frenzy of obstinacy, a belief fanatical as the dark religion of those amongst whom he moved, that he could not now fail and the world go on, that there could be no injustice in the whole scheme of the universe great enough to lay this heavy burden upon the one man least fitted to bear it and then callously to destroy him because he tried.

Fear had him in its grip on that morning three days after he had left Abou Fatma at the wells, when coming over a slope he first saw the sand stretched like a lagoon up to the dark brown walls of the town, and the overshadowing foliage of the big date palms rising on the Nile bank beyond. Within those walls were the crowded Dervishes. It was surely the merest madness for a man to imagine that he could escape detection there, even for an hour. Was it right, he began to ask, that a man should even try? The longer he stood the more insistent did this question grow. The low mud walls grew strangely sinister; the welcome green of the waving palms, after so many arid days of sun and sand and stones, became an ironical invitation to death. He began to wonder whether he had not already done enough for honour in venturing so near.

The sun beat upon him; his strength ebbed from him as though his veins were opened. If he were caught, he thought, as surely he would be—oh, very surely! He saw the fanatical faces crowding fiercely about him . . . were not mutilations practised? . . . He looked about him, shivering even in that strong heat, and

the great loneliness of the place smote upon him, so that his knees shook. He faced about and commenced to run, leaping in a panic alone and unpursued across the naked desert under the sun, while from his throat feeble cries broke inarticulately.

He ran, however, only for a few yards, and it was the very violence of his flight which stopped him. These four years of anticipation were as nothing then? He had schooled himself in the tongue, he had lived in the bazaars to no end? He was still the craven who had sent in his papers. The quiet confidence with which he had revealed his plan to Lieutenant Sutch over the table in the Criterion Grill Room was the mere vainglory of a man who continually deceived himself. And Ethne? . . .

He dropped upon the ground, and drawing his coat over his head lay, a brown spot indistinguishable from the sand about him, an irregularity in the great waste surface of earth. He shut the prospect from his eyes, and over the thousands of miles of continent and sea he drew Ethne's face towards him. A little while and he was back again in Donegal. The summer night whispered through the open doorway in the hall; in a room near by people danced to music. He saw the three feathers fluttering to the floor; he read the growing trouble in Ethne's face. If he could do this thing, and the still harder thing which now he knew to lie beyond, he might perhaps some day see that face cleared of its trouble. There were significant words too in his ears: 'I should have no doubt that you and I would see much of one another afterwards.' Towards the setting of the sun he rose from the ground, and walking down towards Berber, passed between the gates.

CHAPTER XI.

DURRANCE HEARS NEWS OF FEVERSHAM.

A MONTH later Durrance arrived in London and discovered a letter from Ethne awaiting him at his club. It told him simply that she was staying with Mrs. Adair, and would be glad if he would find the time to call, but there was a black border to the paper and the envelope. Durrance called at Hill Street the next afternoon and found Ethne alone.

'I did not write to Wadi Halfa,' she explained at once, 'for I

thought that you would be on your way home before my letter could arrive. My father died towards the end of May.'

'I was afraid when I got your letter that you would have this to tell me,' he replied. 'I am very sorry. You will miss him.'

'More than I can say,' said she with a quiet depth of feeling. 'He died one morning early—I think I will tell you if you would care to hear,' and she related to him the manner of Dermod's death, of which a chill was the occasion rather than the cause; for he died of a gradual dissolution rather than a definite disease.

It was a curious story which Ethne had to tell, for it seemed that just before his death Dermod recaptured something of his old masterful spirit. 'We knew that he was dying,' Ethne said. 'He knew it too, and at seven o'clock of the afternoon after——' she hesitated for a moment and resumed: 'after he had spoken for a little while to me, he called his dog by name. The dog sprang at once on to the bed, though his voice had not risen above a whisper, and crouching quite close, pushed its muzzle with a whine under my father's hand. Then he told me to leave him and the dog altogether alone. I was to shut the door upon him. The dog would tell me when to open it again. I obeyed him and waited outside the door until one o'clock. Then a loud sudden howl moaned through the house.' She stopped for a while. This pause was the only sign of distress which she gave, and in a few moments she went on, speaking quite simply without any of the affectations of grief. 'It was trying to wait outside that door while the afternoon faded and the night came. It was night, of course, long before the end. He would have no lamp left in his room. One imagined him just the other side of that thin door-panel, lying very still and silent in the great four-poster bed with his face towards the hills, and the light falling. One imagined the room slipping away into darkness, and the windows continually looming into a greater importance, and the dog by his side and no one else right to the very end. He would have it that way, but it was rather hard for me.'

Durrance said nothing in reply, but gave her in full measure what she most needed, the sympathy of his silence. He imagined those hours in the passage, six hours of twilight and darkness; he could picture her standing close by the door, with her ear perhaps to the panel, and her hand upon her heart to check its loud beat-

ing. There was something rather cruel he thought in Dermod's resolve to die alone. It was Ethne who broke the silence.

'I said that my father spoke to me just before he told me to leave him. Of whom do you think he spoke?'

She was looking directly at Durrance as she put the question. From neither her eyes nor the level tone of her voice could he gather anything of the answer, but a sudden throb of hope caught away his breath.

'Tell me!' he said in a sort of suspense as he leaned forward in his chair.

'Of Mr. Feversham,' she answered, and he drew back again, and rather suddenly. It was evident that this was not the name which he had expected. He took his eyes from hers and stared downwards at the carpet, so that she might not see his face.

'My father was always very fond of him,' she continued gently, 'and I think that I would like to know if you have any knowledge of what he is doing or where he is.'

Durrance did not answer nor did he raise his face. He reflected upon the strange strong hold which Harry Feversham kept upon the affections of those who had once known him well; so that even the man whom he had wronged, and upon whose daughter he had brought much suffering, must remember him with kindness upon his death-bed. The reflection was not without its bitterness to Durrance at this moment, and this bitterness he was afraid that his face and voice might both betray. But he was compelled to speak, for Ethne insisted.

'You have never come across him, I suppose?' she asked.

Durrance rose from his seat and walked to the window before he answered. He spoke looking out into the street, but though he thus concealed the expression of his face, a thrill of deep anger sounded through his words, in spite of his efforts to subdue his tones.

'No,' he said, 'I never have,' and suddenly his anger had its way with him; it chose as well as informed his words. 'And I never wish to,' he cried. 'He was my friend, I know. But I cannot remember that friendship now. I can only think that if he had been the true man we took him for, you would not have waited alone in that dark passage during those six hours.' He turned again to the centre of the room and asked abruptly:

'You are going back to Glenalla?'

‘Yes.’

‘You will live there alone?’

‘Yes.’

For a little while there was silence between them. Then Durrance walked round to the back of her chair.

‘You once said that you would perhaps tell me why your engagement was broken off.’

‘But you know,’ she said. ‘What you said at the window showed that you knew.’

‘No, I do not. One or two words your father let drop. He asked me for news of Feversham the last time that I spoke with him. But I know nothing definite. I should like you to tell me.’

Ethne shook her head and leaned forward with her elbows on her knees. ‘Not now,’ she said, and silence again followed her words. Durrance broke it again.

‘I have only one more year at Halfa. It would be wise to leave Egypt then, I think. I do not expect much will be done in the Soudan for some little while. I do not think that I will stay there—in any case, I mean, even if you should decide to remain alone at Glenalla.’

Ethne made no pretence to ignore the suggestion of his words. ‘We are neither of us children,’ she said; ‘you have all your life to think of. We should be prudent.’

‘Yes,’ said Durrance with a sudden exasperation, ‘but the right kind of prudence. The prudence which knows that it’s worth while to dare a good deal.’

Ethne did not move. She was leaning forward with her back towards him, so that he could see nothing of her face, and for a long while she remained in this attitude quite silent and very still. She asked a question at the last, and in a very low and gentle voice.

‘Do you want me so very much?’ And before he could answer she turned quickly towards him. ‘Try not to,’ she exclaimed earnestly. ‘For this one year try not to. You have much to occupy your thoughts. Try to forget me altogether’; and there was just sufficient regret in her tone, the regret at the prospect of losing a valued friend, to take all the sting from her words, to confirm Durrance in his delusion that but for her fear that she would spoil his career, she would answer him in very different words. Mrs. Adair came into the room before he could reply, and thus he carried away with him his delusion.

He dined that evening at his club, and sat afterwards smoking his cigar under the big tree where he had sat so persistently a year before in his vain quest for news of Harry Feversham. It was much the same sort of clear night as that on which he had seen Lieutenant Sutch limp into the courtyard and hesitate at the sight of him. The strip of sky was cloudless and starry overhead; the air had the pleasant languor of a summer night in June; the lights flashing from the windows and doorways gave to the leaves of the trees the fresh green look of spring; and outside in the roadway the carriages rolled with a thunderous hum like the sound of the sea. And on this night, too, there came a man into the courtyard who knew Durrance. But he did not hesitate. He came straight up to Durrance and sat down upon the seat at his side. Durrance dropped the paper at which he was glancing and held out his hand.

'How do you do?' said he. This friend was Captain Mather.

'I was wondering whether I should meet you when I read the evening paper. I knew that it was about the time one might expect to find you in London. You have seen, I suppose?'

'What?' asked Durrance.

'Then you haven't,' replied Mather. He picked up the newspaper which Durrance had dropped and turned over the sheets, searching for the piece of news which he required. 'You remember that last reconnaissance we made from Suakin?'

'Very well.'

'We halted by the Sinkat fort at mid-day. There was an Arab hiding in the trees at the back of the glacis.'

'Yes.'

'Have you forgotten the yarn he told you?'

'About Gordon's letters and the wall of a house in Berber. No, I have not forgotten.'

'Then here's something which will interest you,' and Captain Mather, having folded the paper to his satisfaction, handed it to Durrance and pointed to a paragraph. It was a short paragraph; it gave no details; it was the merest summary, and Durrance read it through between the puffs of his cigar.

'The fellow must have gone back to Berber after all,' said he. 'A risky business. Abou Fatma—that was the man's name.'

The paragraph made no mention of Abou Fatma, or indeed of any man except Captain Willoughby, the Deputy-Governor of Suakin. It merely announced that certain letters which the

Mahdi had sent to Gordon summoning him to surrender Khartum, and inviting him to become a convert to the Mahdist religion, together with copies of Gordon's curt replies, had been recovered from a wall in Berber and brought safely to Captain Willoughby at Suakin.

'They were hardly worth risking a life for,' said Mather.

'Perhaps not,' replied Durrance a little doubtfully. 'But after all, one is glad they have been recovered. Perhaps the copies are in Gordon's own hand. They are, at all events, of an historic interest.'

'In a way, no doubt,' said Mather. 'But even so, their recovery throws no light upon the history of the siege. It can make no real difference to anyone, not even to the historian.'

'That is true,' Durrance agreed, and there was nothing more untrue. In the same spot where he had sought for news of Feversham news had now come to him—only he did not know. He was in the dark; he could not appreciate that here was news which, however little it might trouble the historian, touched his life at the springs. He dismissed the paragraph from his mind, and sat thinking over the conversation which had passed that afternoon between Ethne and himself, and without discouragement. Ethne had mentioned Harry Feversham, it was true—had asked for news of him. But she might have been—nay, she probably had been—moved to ask because her father's last words had referred to him. She had spoken his name in a perfectly steady voice, he remembered; and, indeed, the mere fact that she had spoken it at all might be taken as a sign that it had no longer any power with her. There was something hopeful to his mind in her very request that he should try during this one year to omit her from his thoughts. For it seemed almost to imply that if he could not, she might at the end of it, perhaps, give to him the answer for which he longed. He allowed a few days to pass, and then called again at Mrs. Adair's house. But he found only Mrs. Adair. Ethne had left London and returned to Donegal. She had left rather suddenly, Mrs. Adair told him, and Mrs. Adair had no sure knowledge of the reason of her going.

Durrance, however, had no doubt as to the reason. Ethne was putting into practice the policy which she had commended to his thoughts. He was to try to forget her, and she would help him to success so far as she could by her absence from his sight. And in attributing this reason to her Durrance was right. But

one thing Ethne had forgotten. She had not asked him to cease to write to her, and accordingly in the autumn of that year the letters began again to come from the Soudan. She was frankly glad to receive them, but at the same time she was troubled. For in spite of their careful reticence, every now and then a phrase leaped out—it might be merely the repetition of some trivial sentence which she had spoken long ago and long ago forgotten—and she could not but see that in spite of her prayer she lived perpetually in his thoughts. There was a strain of hopefulness too as though he moved in a world painted with new colours and suddenly grown musical. Ethne had never freed herself from the haunting fear that one man's life had been spoilt because of her; she had never faltered from her determination that this should not happen with a second. Only with Durrance's letters before her she could not evade a new and perplexing question. By what means was that possibility to be avoided? There were two ways. By choosing which of them could she fulfil her determination? She was no longer so sure as she had been the year before. The question recurred to her again and again. She took it out with her on the hill-side with the letters, and pondered and puzzled over it and got never an inch nearer to a solution. Even her violin failed her in this strait.

CHAPTER XII.

DURRANCE SHARPENS HIS WITS.

It was a night of May, and outside the mess-room at Wadi Halfa three officers were smoking on a grass knoll above the Nile. The moon was at its full and the strong light had robbed even the planets of their lustre. The smaller stars were not visible at all, and the sky, washed of its dark colour, curved overhead, pearly-hued and luminous. The three officers sat in their lounge chairs and smoked silently, while the bull-frogs croaked from an island in mid-river. At the bottom of the small steep cliff on which they sat the Nile, so sluggish was its flow, shone like a burnished mirror, and from the opposite bank the desert stretched away to infinite distances, a vast plain with scattered hummocks, a plain white as a hoar frost on the surface of which the stones sparkled like jewels. Behind the three officers of the garrison

the roof of the mess-room verandah threw a shadow on the ground; it seemed a solid piece of blackness.

One of the three officers struck a match and held it to the end of his cigar. The flame lit up a troubled and anxious face.

'I hope that no harm has come to him,' he said as he threw the match away. 'I wish that I could say I believed it.'

The speaker was a man of middle age and the colonel of a Soudanese battalion. He was answered by a man whose hair had gone grey, it is true. But grey hair is frequent in the Soudan, and his unlined face still showed that he was young. He was Lieutenant Calder of the Engineers. Youth, however, in this instance had no optimism wherewith to challenge Colonel Dawson.

'He left Halfa eight weeks ago, eh?' he said gloomily.

'Eight weeks to-day,' replied the Colonel.

It was the third officer, a tall, spare, long-necked major of the Army Service Corps, who alone hazarded a cheerful prophecy.

'It's early days to conclude Durrance has got scuppered,' said he. 'One knows Durrance. Give him a camp fire in the desert, and a couple of sheiks to sit round it with him, and he'll buck to them for a month and never feel bored at the end. While here there are letters, and there's an office, and there's a desk in the office and everything he loathes and can't do with. You'll see Durrance will turn up right enough, though he won't hurry about it.'

'He is three weeks overdue,' objected the Colonel, 'and he's methodical after a fashion. I am afraid.'

Major Walters pointed out his arm to the white empty desert across the river.

'If he had travelled that way, westwards, I might agree,' he said. 'But Durrance went east through the mountain country towards Berenice and the Red Sea. The tribes he went to visit were quiet even in the worst times when Osman Digna lay before Suakin.'

The Colonel, however, took no comfort from Walters' confidence. He tugged at his moustache and repeated 'He is three weeks overdue.'

Lieutenant Calder knocked the ashes from his pipe and refilled it. He leaned forward in his chair as he pressed the tobacco down with his thumb, and he said slowly:

'I wonder. It is just possible that some sort of trap was laid

for Durrance. I am not sure. I never mentioned before what I knew, because until lately I did not suspect that it could have anything to do with his delay. But now I begin to wonder. You remember the night before he started ?'

'Yes,' said Dawson, and he hitched his chair a little nearer. Calder was the one man in Wadi Halfa who could claim something like intimacy with Durrance. Despite their difference in rank there was no great disparity in age between the two men, and from the first when Calder had come inexperienced and fresh from England, but with a great ardour to acquire a comprehensive experience, Durrance in his reticent way had been at pains to show the newcomer considerable friendship. Calder therefore might be likely to know.

'I, too, remember that night,' said Walters. 'Durrance dined at the mess and went away early to prepare for his journey.'

'His preparations were made already,' said Calder. 'He went away early as you say. But he did not go to his quarters. He walked along the river bank to Tewfikieh.'

Wadi Halfa was the military station, Tewfikieh a little frontier town to the north separated from Halfa by a mile of river-bank. A few Greeks kept stores there, a few bare and dirty cafés faced the street between native cook-shops and tobacconists ; a noisy little town where the negro from the Dinka country jostled the fellah from the Delta and the air was torn with many dialects ; a thronged little town which yet lacked to European ears one distinctive element of a throng. There was no ring of footsteps. The crowd walked on sand and for the most part with naked feet, so that if for a rare moment the sharp high cries and the perpetual voices ceased, the figures of men and women flitted by noiseless as ghosts. And even at night, when the streets were most crowded and the uproar loudest, it seemed that underneath the noise, and almost appreciable to the ear, there lay a deep and brooding silence, the silence of deserts and the East.

'Durrance went down to Tewfikieh at ten o'clock that night,' said Calder. 'I went to his quarters at eleven. He had not returned. He was starting eastwards at four in the morning, and there was some detail of business on which I wished to speak to him before he went. So I waited for his return. He came in about a quarter of an hour afterwards and told me at once that I must be quick since he was expecting a visitor. He spoke quickly and rather restlessly. He seemed to be labouring under

some excitement. He barely listened to what I had to say, and he answered me at random. It was quite evident that he was moved, and rather deeply moved, by some unusual feeling, though at the nature of the feeling I could not guess. For at one moment it seemed certainly to be anger, and the next moment he relaxed into a laugh, as though in spite of himself he was glad. However, he bundled me out, and as I went I heard him telling his servant to go to bed, because, though he expected a visitor, he would admit the visitor himself.

‘Well!’ said Dawson, ‘and who was the visitor?’

‘I do not know,’ answered Calder. ‘The one thing I do know is that when Durrance’s servant went to call him at four o’clock for his journey, he found Durrance still sitting on the verandah outside his quarters, as though he still expected his visitor. The visitor had not come.’

‘And Durrance left no message?’

‘No. I was up myself before he started. I thought that he was puzzled and worried. I thought, too, that he meant to tell me what was the matter. I still think that he had that in his mind, but that he could not decide. For even after he had taken his seat upon his saddle and his camel had risen from the ground, he turned and looked down towards me. But he thought better of it, or worse, as the case may be. At all events, he did not speak. He struck the camel on the flank with his stick, and rode slowly past the post-office and out into the desert, with his head sunk upon his breast. I wonder whether he rode into a trap. Who could this visitor have been whom he meets in the street of Tewfikieh, and who must come so secretly to Wadi Halfa? What can have been his business with Durrance? Important business, troublesome business—so much is evident. And he did not come to transact it. Was the whole thing a lure to which we have not the clue? Like Colonel Dawson, I am afraid.’

There was a silence after he had finished, which Major Walters was the first to break. He offered no argument—he simply expressed again his unalterable cheerfulness.

‘I don’t think Durrance has got scuppered,’ said he as he rose from his chair.

‘I know what I shall do,’ said the Colonel. ‘I shall send out a strong search party in the morning.’

And the next morning, as they sat at breakfast on the verandah,

he at once proceeded to describe the force which he meant to despatch. Major Walters, too, it seemed, in spite of his hopeful prophecies, had pondered during the night over Calder's story, and he leaned across the table to Calder.

'Did you never inquire whom Durrance talked with at Tewfikieh on that night?' he asked.

'I did, and there's a point that puzzles me,' said Calder. He was sitting with his back to the Nile and his face towards the glass doors of the mess-room, and he spoke to Walters, who was directly opposite. 'I could not find that he talked to more than one person, and that one person could not by any likelihood have been the visitor he expected. Durrance stopped in front of a café where some strolling musicians, who had somehow wandered up to Tewfikieh, were playing and singing for their night's lodging. One of them, a Greek, I was told, came outside into the street and took his hat round. Durrance threw a sovereign into the hat, the man turned to thank him, and they talked for a little time together':—and as he came to this point he raised his head. A look of recognition came into his face. He laid his hands upon the table-edge, and leaned forward with his feet drawn back beneath his chair as though he was on the point of springing up. But he did not spring up. His look of recognition became one of bewilderment. He glanced round the table and saw that Colonel Dawson was helping himself to cocoa, while Major Walters' eyes were on his plate. There were other officers of the garrison present, but not one had remarked his movement and its sudden arrest. Calder leaned back, and staring curiously in front of him and over the Major's shoulder, continued his story. 'But I could never hear that Durrance spoke to anyone else. He seemed, except that one knows to the contrary, merely to have strolled through the village and back again to Wadi Halfa.

'That doesn't help us much,' said the Major.

'And it's all you know?' asked the Colonel.

'No, not quite all,' returned Calder slowly; 'I know, for instance, that the man we are talking about is staring me straight in the face.'

At once everybody at the table turned towards the mess-room.

'Durrance!' cried the Colonel, springing up.

'When did you get back?' said the Major.

Durrance, with the dust of his journey still powdered upon

his clothes, and a face burnt to the colour of red brick, was standing in the doorway, and listening with a remarkable intentness to the voices of his fellow-officers. It was perhaps noticeable that Calder, who was Durrance's friend, neither rose from his chair nor offered any greeting. He still sat watching Durrance; he still remained curious and perplexed; but as Durrance descended the three steps into the verandah there came a quick and troubled look of comprehension into his face.

'We expected you three weeks ago,' said Dawson, as he pulled a chair away from an empty place at the table.

'The delay could not be helped,' replied Durrance. He took the chair and drew it up.

'Does my story account for it?' asked Calder.

'Not a bit. It was the Greek musician I expected that night,' he explained with a laugh. 'I was curious to know what stroke of ill-luck had cast him out to play the zither for a night's lodging in a café at Tewfikieh. That was all,' and he added slowly in a softer voice, 'Yes, that was all.'

'Meanwhile you are forgetting your breakfast,' said Dawson as he rose. 'What will you have?'

Calder leaned ever so slightly forward with his eyes quietly resting on Durrance. Durrance looked round the table, and then called the mess-waiter. 'Moussa, get me something cold,' said he, and the waiter went back into the mess-room. Calder nodded his head with a faint smile, as though he understood that here was a difficulty rather cleverly surmounted.

'There's tea, cocoa, and coffee,' he said. 'Help yourself, Durrance.'

'Thanks,' said Durrance. 'I see, but I will get Moussa to bring me a brandy-and-soda, I think,' and again Calder nodded his head.

Durrance eat his breakfast and drank his brandy-and-soda, and talked the while of his journey. He had travelled further eastwards than he had intended. He had found the Ababdeh Arabs quiet amongst their mountains. If they were not disposed to acknowledge allegiance to Egypt, on the other hand, they paid no tribute to Mahommed Achmet. The weather had been good, ibex and antelope plentiful. Durrance on the whole had reason to be content with his journey. And Calder sat and watched him, and disbelieved every word that was said. The other officers went about their duties; Calder remained behind, and waited

until Durrance should finish. But it seemed that Durrance never would finish. He loitered over his breakfast, and when that was done he pushed his plate away and sat talking. There was no end to his questions as to what had passed at Wadi Halfa during the last eight weeks, no limit to his enthusiasm over the journey from which he had just returned. Finally, however, he stopped with a remarkable abruptness, and said with some suspicion to his companion :

‘ You are taking life easily this morning.’

‘ I have not eight weeks’ arrears of letters to clear off, as you have, Colonel,’ Calder returned with a laugh ; and he saw Durrance’s face cloud and his forehead contract.

‘ True,’ he said, after a pause. ‘ I had forgotten my letters.’ And he rose from his seat at the table, mounted the steps, and passed into the mess-room.

Calder immediately sprang up, and with his eyes followed Durrance’s movements. Durrance went to a nail which was fixed in the wall close to the glass doors and on a level with his head. From that nail he took down the key of his office, crossed the room, and went out through the further door. That door he left open, and Calder could see him walk down the path between the bushes through the tiny garden in front of the mess, unlatch the gates, and cross the open space of sand towards his office. As soon as Durrance had disappeared Calder sat down again, and, resting his elbows on the table, propped his face between his hands. Calder was troubled. He was a friend of Durrance’s ; he was the one man in Wadi Halfa who possessed something of Durrance’s confidence ; he knew that there were certain letters in a woman’s handwriting waiting for him in his office. He was very deeply troubled. Durrance had aged during these eight weeks. There were furrows about his mouth where only faint lines had been visible when he had started out from Halfa ; and it was not merely desert dust which had discoloured his hair. His hilarity, too, had an artificial air. He had sat at the table constraining himself to the semblance of high spirits. Calder lit his pipe, and sat for a long while by the empty table.

Then he took his helmet and crossed the sand to Durrance’s office. He lifted the latch noiselessly ; as noiselessly he opened the door, and he looked in. Durrance was sitting at his desk with his head bowed upon his arms and all his letters unopened at his side. Calder stepped into the room and closed the door

loudly behind him. At once Durrance turned his face to the door.

‘Well?’ said he.

‘I have a paper, Colonel, which requires your signature,’ said Calder. ‘It’s the authority for the alterations in C barracks. You remember?’

‘Very well. I will look through it and return it to you, signed, at lunch-time. Will you give it to me, please?’

He held out his hand towards Calder. Calder took his pipe from his mouth, and, standing thus in full view of Durrance, slowly and deliberately placed it into Durrance’s outstretched palm. It was not until the hot bowl burnt his hand that Durrance snatched his arm away. The pipe fell and broke upon the floor. Neither of the two men spoke for a few moments, and then Calder put his arm round Durrance’s shoulders, and asked in a voice gentle as a woman’s :

‘How did it happen?’

Durrance buried his face in his hands. The great control which he had exercised till now he was no longer able to sustain. He did not answer, nor did he utter any sound, but he sat shivering from head to foot.

‘How did it happen?’ Calder asked again, and in a whisper. Durrance put another question :

‘How did you find out?’

‘You stood in the mess-room doorway listening to discover whose voice spoke from where. When I raised my head and saw you, though your eyes rested on my face there was no recognition in them. I suspected then. When you came down the steps into the verandah I became almost certain. When you would not help yourself to food, when you reached out your arm over your shoulder so that Moussa had to put the brandy-and-soda safely into your palm, I was sure.’

‘I was a fool to try and hide it,’ said Durrance. ‘Of course I knew all the time that I couldn’t for more than a few hours. But even those few hours somehow seemed a gain.’

‘How did it happen?’

‘There was a high wind,’ Durrance explained. ‘It took my helmet off. It was eight o’clock in the morning. I did not mean to move my camp that day, and I was standing outside my tent in my shirt-sleeves. So you see that I had not even the collar of a coat to protect the nape of my neck. I was fool enough to run

after my helmet; and—you must have seen the same thing happen a hundred times—each time that I stooped to pick it up it skipped away; each time that I ran after it, it stopped and waited for me to catch it up. And before one is aware what one is doing one has run a quarter of a mile. I went down, I was told, like a log just when I had it in my hand. How long ago it happened I don't quite know, for I was ill for a time, and afterwards it was difficult to keep count, since one couldn't tell the difference between day and night.'

Durrance, in a word, had gone blind. He told the rest of his story. He had bidden his followers carry him back to Berber, and then, influenced by the natural wish to hide his calamity as long as he could, he had enjoined upon them silence. Calder heard the story through to the end, and then rose at once to his feet.

'There's a doctor. He is clever, and, for a Syrian, knows a good deal. I will fetch him here privately, and we will hear what he says. Your blindness may be merely temporary.'

The Syrian doctor, however, pursed up his lips and shook his head. He advised an immediate departure to Cairo. It was a case for a specialist. He himself would hesitate to pronounce an opinion, though, to be sure, there was always hope of a cure.

'Have you ever suffered an injury in the head?' he asked. 'Were you ever thrown from your horse? Were you wounded?'

'No,' said Durrance.

The Syrian did not disguise his conviction that the case was grave; and after he had departed both men were silent for some time. Calder had a feeling that any attempt at consolation would be futile in itself, and might, moreover, in betraying his own fear that the hurt was irreparable, only discourage his companion. He turned to the pile of letters and looked them through.

'There are two letters here, Durrance,' he said gently, 'which you might perhaps care to hear. They are written in a woman's hand, and there is an Irish postmark. Shall I open them?'

'No,' exclaimed Durrance suddenly; and his hand dropped quickly upon Calder's arm. 'By no means.'

Calder, however, did not put down the letters. He was anxious, for private reasons of his own, to learn something more of Ethne Eustace than the outside of her letters could reveal. A few rare references made in unusual moments of confidence by

Durrance had only informed Calder of her name, and assured him that his friend would be very glad to change it if he could. He looked at Durrance—a man so trained to vigour and activity that his very sunburn seemed an essential quality rather than an accident of the country in which he lived; a man, too, who came to the wild, uncitied places of the world with the joy of one who comes into an inheritance; a man to whom these desolate tracts were home, and the fireside and the hedged fields and made roads merely the other places; and he understood the magnitude of the calamity which had befallen him. Therefore he was most anxious to know more of this girl who wrote to Durrance from Donegal, and to gather from her letters, as from a mirror in which her image was reflected, some speculation as to her character. For if she failed, what had this friend of his any longer left?

‘You would like to hear them, I expect,’ he insisted. ‘You have been away eight weeks.’ And he was interrupted by a harsh laugh.

‘Do you know what I was thinking when I stopped you?’ said Durrance. ‘Why, that I would read the letters after you had gone. It takes time to get used to being blind after your eyes have served you pretty well all your life.’ And his voice shook ever so little. ‘You will have to answer them, Calder, for me. So read them. Please read them.’

Calder tore open the envelopes and read the letters through and was satisfied. They gave a record of the simple doings of her mountain village in Donegal, and in the simplest terms. But the girl’s nature shone out in the telling. Her love of the countryside and of the people who dwelt there was manifest. She could see the humour and the tragedy of the small village troubles. There was a warm friendliness for Durrance moreover expressed, not so much in a sentence as in the whole spirit of the letters. It was evident that she was most keenly interested in all that he did, that, in a way, she looked upon his career as a thing in which she had a share, even if it was only a friend’s share. And when Calder had ended he looked again at Durrance, but now with a face of relief. It seemed, too, that Durrance was relieved.

‘After all, one has something to be thankful for,’ he cried. ‘Think! Suppose that I had been engaged to her? She would never have allowed me to break it off, once I had gone blind. What an escape!’

‘An escape?’ exclaimed Calder.

'You don't understand. But I knew a man who went blind, a good fellow, too, before—mind that, before! But a year after! You couldn't have recognised him. He had narrowed down into the most selfish, exacting, egotistical creature it is possible to imagine. I don't wonder, I hardly see how he could help it, I don't blame him. But it wouldn't make life easier for a wife, would it? A helpless husband who can't cross a road without his wife at his elbow is bad enough. But make him a selfish beast into the bargain, full of questions, jealous of her power to go where she will, curious as to every person with whom she speaks—and what then? My God, I am glad that girl refused me. For that I am most grateful.'

'She refused you?' asked Calder, and the relief passed from his face and voice.

'Twice,' said Durrance. 'What an escape! You see, Calder, I shall be more trouble even than the man I told you of. I am not clever. I can't sit in a chair and amuse myself by thinking, not having any intellect to buck about. I have lived out of doors and hard, and that's the only sort of life that suits me. I tell you, Calder, you won't be very anxious for much of my society in a year's time,' and he laughed again and with the same harshness.

'Oh, stop that,' said Calder; 'I will read the rest of your letters to you.'

He read them, however, without much attention to their contents. His mind was occupied with the two letters from Ethne Eustace, and he was wondering whether there was any deeper emotion than mere friendship hidden beneath the words. Girls refused men for all sorts of queer reasons which had no sense in them, and very often they were sick and sorry about it afterwards; and very often they meant to accept the men all the time.

'I must answer the letters from Ireland,' said Durrance, when he had finished. 'The rest can wait.'

Calder held a sheet of paper upon the desk and told Durrance when he was writing on a slant and when he was writing on the blotting-pad; and in this way Durrance wrote to tell Ethne that a sunstroke had deprived him of his sight. Calder took that letter away. But he took it to the hospital and asked for the Syrian doctor. The doctor came out to him, and they walked together under the trees in front of the building.

'Tell me the truth,' said Calder.

The doctor blinked behind his spectacles.

'The optic nerve is, I think, destroyed,' he replied.

'Then there is no hope?'

'None, if my diagnosis is correct.'

Calder turned the letter over and over, as though he could not make up his mind what in the world to do with it.

'Can a sunstroke destroy the optic nerve?' he asked at length.

'A mere sunstroke? No,' replied the doctor. 'But it may be the occasion. For the cause one must look deeper.'

Calder came to a stop, and there was a look of horror in his eyes. 'You mean—one must look to the brain?'

'Yes.'

They walked on for a few paces. A further question was in Calder's mind, but he had some difficulty in speaking it, and when he had spoken he waited for the answer in suspense.

'Then this calamity is not all. There will be more to follow—death or——' but that other alternative he could not bring himself to utter. Here, however, the doctor was able to reassure him.

'No. That does not follow.'

Calder went back to the mess-room and called for a brandy-and-soda. He was more disturbed by the blow which had fallen upon Durrance than he would have cared to own; and he put the letter upon the table and thought of the message of renunciation which it contained, and he could hardly restrain his fingers from tearing it across. It must be sent, he knew, its destruction would be of no more than a temporary avail. Yet he could hardly bring himself to post it. With the passage of every minute he realised more clearly what blindness meant to Durrance. A man not very clever, as he himself was ever the first to acknowledge, and always the inheritor of the other places—how much more it meant to him than to the ordinary run of men! Would the girl, he wondered, understand as clearly? It was very silent that morning on the verandah at Wadi Halfa; the sunlight blazed upon desert and river; not a breath of wind stirred the foliage of any bush. Calder drank his brandy-and-soda and slowly that question forced itself more and more into the front of his mind. Would the woman over in Ireland understand? He rose from his chair as he heard Colonel Dawson's voice in the mess-room, and taking up his letter walked away to the post-office. Durrance's letter was

despatched, but somewhere in the Mediterranean it crossed a letter from Ethne, which Durrance received a fortnight later at Cairo. It was read out to him by Calder, who had obtained leave to come down from Wadi Halfa with his friend. Ethne wrote that she had, during the last months, considered all that he had said when at Glenalla and in London; she had read, too, his letters and understood that in his thoughts of her there had been no change, and that there would be none; she therefore went back upon her old argument that she would by marriage be doing him an injury, and she would marry him upon his return to England.

'That's rough luck, isn't it?' said Durrance, when Calder had read the letter through. 'For here's the one thing I have always wished for, and it comes when I can no longer take it.'

'I think you will find it very difficult to refuse to take it,' said Calder. 'I do not know Miss Eustace, but I can hazard a guess from the letters of hers which I have read to you. I do not think that she is a woman who will say "yes" one day, and then because bad times come to you, say "no" the next, or allow you to say "no" for her either. I have a sort of notion that since she cares for you and you for her, you are doing little less than insulting her if you imagine that she cannot marry you and still be happy.'

Durrance thought over that aspect of the question, and began to wonder. Calder might be right. Marriage with a blind man! It might, perhaps, be possible if upon both sides there was love, and the letter from Ethne proved—did it not?—that on both sides there was love. Besides there were some trivial compensations which might help to make her sacrifice less burdensome. She could still live in her own country and move in her own home. For the Lennon house could be rebuilt and the estates cleared of their debt.

'Besides,' said Calder, 'there is always a possibility of a cure.'

'There is no such possibility,' said Durrance with a decision which quite startled his companion. 'You know that as well as I do,' and he added with a laugh, 'you needn't start so guiltily. I haven't overheard a word of any of your conversations about me.'

'Then what in the world makes you think that there's no chance?'

'The voice of every doctor who has encouraged me to hope. Their words—yes—their words tell me to visit specialists in

Europe, and not lose heart, but their voices give the lie to their words. If one cannot see, one can at all events hear.'

Calder looked thoughtfully at his friend. This was not the only occasion on which of late Durrance had surprised his friends by a certain unfamiliar acuteness. Calder glanced uncomfortably at the letter which he was still holding in his hand.

'When was that letter written?' said Durrance suddenly, and immediately upon the question he asked another. 'What makes you jump?'

Calder laughed and explained hastily. 'Why, I was looking at the letter at the moment when you asked, and your question came so pat that I could hardly believe you did not see what I was doing. It was written on the fifteenth of May.'

'Ah,' said Durrance, 'the day I returned to Wadi Halfa blind.'

Calder sat in his chair without a movement. He gazed anxiously at his companion, it seemed almost as though he was afraid; his attitude was one of suspense.

'That's a queer coincidence,' said Durrance with a careless laugh; and Calder had an intuition that he was listening with the utmost intentness for some movement on his own part, perhaps, a relaxation of his attitude, perhaps, perhaps a breath of relief. Calder did not move, however; and he drew no breath of relief.

(To be continued.)

